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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS

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FOREWORD

In a strictly legal sense, the installation of a new President of the United States is simply a matter of repeating the oath of office on inauguration day. But the transfer of effective governmental power symbolized by the inaugural ceremony is a complex process, which begins long before inauguration day and continues long afterward. Under modern conditions of government, this transition process becomes of serious concern. The heavy responsibilities borne by the federal government, both at home and abroad, make it essential that readiness for prompt decisions and continuity of administration be maintained while one set of executive branch leaders is giving way to another. At the same time, it is important to assure that government will be properly responsive to new leadership following an electoral change.

This book reviews the evolution of the transition process through the four party overturns in the Presidency that have occurred in the twentieth century. In each of these cases the author describes how the President and President-elect prepared for the transfer of power and dealt with each other, how the incoming President organized his administration and executed his commitments, and how the institutions of government both contributed to and were affected by the experience. There is an attempt throughout to consider the effect on the transition process of the historical setting and the leadership concepts of the principal figures, the contribution to continuity and responsiveness made by particular practices and governmental institutions, and the relation of the transition problem to the underlying constitutional and party structure. In closing,

the author discusses the general prospects for safeguarding the public interest in the transitions of the future, and makes suggestions for improving the process of transferring presidential power.

The present volume is the seventh in a series of related Brookings studies of electoral and governing processes which were planned and launched under the leadership of Paul T. David, Director of Governmental Studies 1953-58, and have been continued under the supervision of the present Director, George A. Graham. The series includes *Executives for Government* (1957), by Paul T. David and Ross Pollock; *The Job of the Federal Executive* (1958), by Marver H. Bernstein; *The Politics of National Party Conventions* (1960), by Paul T. David, Ralph M. Goldman, and Richard C. Bain; *Convention Decisions and Voting Records* (1960), by Richard C. Bain; *The 1956 Presidential Campaign* (1960), by Charles A. H. Thomson and Frances M. Shattuck; and *Political Campaigning* (1960), by Stanley Kelley, Jr. Yet to come is a study of opposition party leadership in America by Ralph M. Goldman.

In carrying out this study, the Institution and the author have had the aid of the following advisory committee: George A. Graham, Paul T. David, Rowland Egger, H. Field Haviland, Jr., and Herman M. Somers. The contribution of these and many other persons, and of the Ford Foundation which provided basic financial support, is gratefully acknowledged.

ROBERT D. CALKINS
President

October 6, 1960

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In the course of a study as long as the one that led to this book, an author makes decisions and incurs obligations that require at least a few words of acknowledgment.

My original idea was to write a book about the transition from the Truman to the Eisenhower administration. However, when I took what was intended to be a quick look at some of the previous transitions, just to get my bearings, I found both striking parallels and tantalizing gaps that seemed to require further explanation. In the end, each of the earlier transitions became a sizable study in itself. On the whole, I believe that this excursion into history has given me—and I hope will give the reader—a perspective permitting a much more confident judgment of recent events and current situations than would otherwise be possible. This historical approach has meant, however, that many important aspects of the transition of 1952-53, particularly the experience at the departmental level, remain inadequately explored. And the history is incomplete, for I have not had the time or space to compare in-party transitions with the party overturns.

The book as it stands reflects a continuous struggle with at least three problems. One was the difficulty of finding and handling the data necessary to describe a presidential transition as such without becoming lost in the broader political history of the period. Second was the problem of finding a method of organization and style of writing that would do three things simultaneously: (1) Illuminate the problems of presidential transitions in a way that would be useful in current affairs; (2) show the

connection of these immediate, specific problems to the deeper problems of institutional structure and function that have long been of interest to political scientists; and (3) give the reader a feeling of reality about the inherently interesting people and dramatic situations being dealt with. Finally, there was the problem of being objective about persons still on the scene and events so recent that there is no historical consensus about them. Such difficulties seem to be inherent in studies of this kind. I have handled them as well as I could; the reader can judge the result.

In various ways I have received encouragement, assistance, and advice from a great many people in addition to those who have been formally implicated in the Foreword. None that I am about to mention should be held responsible, but it is a better book for their efforts.

My interest in presidential transitions goes back to 1952-53 when, as a staff member of Public Administration Clearing House, I participated in a project to "capture and record" some of the experience of the Truman-Eisenhower turnover. Raw material accumulated on that project provided a starting point for the present study. For the counsel and continuing friendship of Louis Brownlow, Herbert Emmerich, Don K. Price, Rowland Egger, G. Lyle Belsley, Opal D. David, and others of PACH I am deeply grateful.

I am also glad for this opportunity to acknowledge my debt to the late Arnold Miles, who influenced my thinking and gave me some useful material that he had himself collected.

I should like to record my personal thanks to Robert D. Calkins and the members of the advisory committee, my special obligation to Paul T. David, who helped launch this study as a Brookings project, and to George A. Graham, who bore with me while I finished it. I have had fine research assistance from Arthur Banks, Harry P. Stumpf, and Marcia Tracy Marple, who also prepared the index. The Brookings editor, A. Evelyn Breck, has done great things for both the book and my own morale at critical stages. A list of the other colleagues who have provided help and encouragement along the way would almost duplicate the present and former rosters of the Brookings Institution.

Professor Frank Friedel of Harvard University read and commented generously on the portion of the manuscript dealing with the Hoover-Roosevelt transition.

This is a convenient place to express my appreciation for the aid and

friendship of Morton Grodzins, Charles M. Hardin, Doreen Herlihy, C. Herman Pritchett, and Edgar L. Shor, all of the University of Chicago.

In recent months I have had the benefit of interviews or comments on portions of the manuscript from about fifty persons, ranging from well-known public figures to discreetly anonymous civil servants, who participated in or observed closely some of the events described. Rather than trying to list all of them, at the risk of overlooking some and involving others who might prefer not to be named, I will simply record my thanks and my regret if my final interpretations do not in all cases square with the views they gave me.

Finally, an acknowledgment of my everlasting gratitude to all the members of my family who, contrary to all reason, never quite lost their faith that I would eventually complete this book.

LAURIN L. HENRY

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

—PRESIDENT'S OATH OF OFFICE

CHAPTER I

TRANSFERRING THE PRESIDENCY

Noon on January 20. The red-jacketed Marine Band strikes up "Hail to the Chief" as the President and the President-elect emerge from the Capitol and proceed to the front of the inaugural platform. A few minutes later, after prayers and patriotic songs, the President-elect stands beside the Chief Justice and repeats a simple oath. An instant ago he was a private citizen. Now, invested with the authority of the Presidency, he turns and speaks to the Nation and to the world. He finishes and withdraws; the Marines hail the new chief, while the old chief slips away as inconspicuously as he can. Symbolically and legally, there has been perfect continuity in the nation's highest office.

But the transfer of political power symbolized by the inaugural ceremony is not as short and simple as that. It is actually a complicated, attenuated process, extending over a year or more in its most active phases. The chances are that the influence of the outgoing President has been declining for several months. Since election day, if not before, both President and President-elect have been preparing for the turnover. Meanwhile, national leadership has been diffused. The President, although bearing the legal responsibility, has been essentially a caretaker of the national estate with limited ability and willingness to make commitments. The President-elect, despite his greater popularity and potential influence, has been preoccupied with his problems of preparation and inhibited by his lack of official information and legal authority. The normal flow of top-level decisions has been interrupted and the government's capacity to respond to emergencies may have been seriously damaged.

The inauguration reunites popularity, influence, and formal authority in the Presidency, but in some respects the shift of power is only beginning. The new President and the associates he brings into the government now must begin to learn their jobs, fulfill their commitments, and re-cast governmental policies in light of their own objectives. This process will require adjustments in the relations of the President with Congress, foreign nations, domestic interest groups, political parties, the federal bureaucracy, and other institutions impinging on the Presidency. The arrival of a new administration is a crisis for all of these groups, as well as for the Presidency itself. The duration of the crisis will vary among sectors of governmental activity; in some areas the new administration may establish itself and restore stability within a few weeks; in others the instability may persist until the mid-term congressional elections or longer. In most respects, however, it seems to take about a year for an administration to put its stamp on basic policies and institutions and settle down to its characteristic modes of behavior.

These periods of uncertainty, change, and adjustment in anticipation and consequence of a change in occupants of the White House will be referred to hereafter as "presidential transitions." These transitions have both practical and academic significance. They raise problems and difficulties that responsible political leaders must manage satisfactorily if the public safety and welfare are to be maintained. As recurring phenomena of government, they also are interesting subjects for investigation by political scientists. The immediate purpose of this book is to identify the practical problems involved in transferring the Presidency and to explore ways to solve or mitigate them. But this requires first an understanding of the underlying political processes. The body of the book is devoted to describing in some detail four important transfers of the Presidency in the twentieth century, with the object of identifying the recurring patterns and tracing the evolution of problems and the means for dealing with them. The conclusion turns to specific problems of transition and what might be done about them.

AN OLD PROBLEM IN NEW FORM

In long perspective, the subject dealt with here is a modern American descendant of an ancient problem of government. Perhaps as long as

men have been writing on political subjects, "stability of government" has been one of the standards by which constitutions and arrangements for the succession of chiefs of state have been evaluated. This was one of the reasons the American Presidency was initially considered a significant and probably risky departure from the monarchical tradition. As late as the 1830's, de Toqueville observed that the elective Presidency left much to be desired because free competition for the office might divide the country and paralyze the government. Elections had been managed without disaster until then, he suspected, because of the country's fortunate freedom from external threat and because the potential powers of the President had not yet been sufficiently demonstrated to attract desperate men. "Whatever the prerogatives of the executive power may be," he concluded, "the period which immediately precedes an election and the moment of its duration must always be considered as a national crisis, which is perilous in proportion to the internal embarrassments and the external dangers of the country."[1] Indeed, a generation later history seemed to confirm this gloomy hypothesis, as the election of 1860 proved the final shock needed to split the nation, and North and South fell apart rapidly in the confusing four months between election day and Lincoln's inauguration.

In the years since the Civil War (or at least since the contested Tilden-Hayes election of 1876), reasonably smooth working of the elective aspects of presidential succession has come to be taken for granted. Presidential politics agitates the political community one year out of every four, but it is safe to assume that free elections will be held on schedule. Indeed, inaugural ceremonies and related festivities have become more than celebrations by the victors. They are rituals of democracy, affirming the public faith that this electoral process, despite its imperfections, offers significant choices that lead to the designation of a leader, legitimate and politically responsible enough to merit the allegiance of the entire nation. On inauguration day, personal and partisan differences are temporarily submerged; all unite in saluting the new President. At such moments, the American hardly bothers to conceal his scorn for the cabinet crises of Europe and the *coups* and revolutions by which presidents often are made and unmade in Latin America.

But the achievement of a kind of stability in presidential succession arrangements that might be considered highly satisfactory in other times

[1] Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America,* Vol. 1 (1900), p. 130.

and other places is not enough for the United States in present-day circumstances. It is no longer enough to be satisfied that the new President will be designated on time and inaugurated peacefully. One must now be concerned with what happens to effective authority before and after the transfer of formal responsibility.

There are two broad requirements. The first of these is continuity—continuity both of presidential leadership and administrative performance. In the past fifty years the United States government has grown enormously in size, power, and responsibility. It has interests and commitments all over the globe. International crisis is now almost a normal way of life; threats of war and delicate international negotiations continue without let-up. In an era of implacable enemies, hydrogen bombs, and intercontinental missiles, even an hour's break in capacity for responsible decisions invites disaster. Prolonged leadership fumbling and policy drift of the sort that has occurred more than once in past intervals between election and inauguration is no longer tolerable. Neither is ill-informed, irresponsible decision-making by a newly installed administration. Domestically, vast areas of economic and social activity depend on a continuous flow of federal government decisions, actions, and services. The government helps steer the economy between the dangers of boom and depression with ever-narrowing economic—and political—tolerance for miscalculation. Partisan excesses or managerial bungling could seriously disrupt the functions of government or do costly damage to the huge, complex bureaucracy. Both in its foreign and domestic interests, the federal government requires continuity of responsible leadership and expert management through presidential transitions.

Continuity, however, is not the only value to be sought; if it were, one might not wish to have elections at all. Responsiveness of the government to new political leadership is equally important. Having been designated by the people as the new national leader, the incoming President deserves a fair chance to work out and apply policies reflecting his objectives. This is not to say that he should have untrammeled, dictatorial powers; he must work within the framework of his legal authority, and Congress (and through Congress the political parties and other groups) will have much to say about what the policies should be. But it is desirable for the new President and his associates to be able to learn quickly the facts and the alternatives, make intelligent policy choices, advance their proposals in the legislative arena, and make their will

effective on the matters falling legitimately under their authority. It is not in the national interest for them to be confused by the complexity of the issues, frustrated by the fractionalization of legislative power, or smothered by a huge, immovable bureaucracy. Yet the very conditions of modern government that make continuity so essential may tend to impede prompt and responsibly directed change. The procedures and institutions that play a part in presidential transitions must be evaluated in terms of their contribution to responsiveness as well as to continuity.

THE STUDY OF TRANSITIONS

On the whole, the problems of continuity and change posed by turnover in the occupants of elective offices have been overlooked by students of American government and politics. Campaigns, voting, and elections have been subjected to elaborate analysis, but election aftermaths have not been systematically studied. The activities of Presidents-elect are followed in detail by the press. But journalists, historians, and biographers tend to treat each episode as a unique case. There have been no general or comparative studies of how a winner goes about preparing himself, how the incumbent prepares to deliver the office to him, or what the new occupant does when he gets it. Political parties have been considered primarily as campaigning institutions, and no one has paid much attention to the party-in-victory. Studies of the Presidency, of the legislative process, of lobbying and pressure groups, tend to assume a between-elections normality. The possibility of identifying broad rhythms in policy-making activity keyed to the electoral cycle remains to be explored.

This deficiency became especially apparent after the Republican presidential victory in 1952, which caught both students and practitioners of public administration unprepared.

> Lulled by two decades of one-party continuity, many American students had seemingly forgotten that one of the purposes of the political system is to provide for turnovers of party leadership and transitions in administration. Concerned as some were to show that public administration is different from other kinds of administration, they had overlooked one overwhelming, yet elemental, fact of difference—the orderly, calendared change in leadership as a result of election. Thought and technique had been developed for handling budgets, personnel, planning, and organization struc-

ture, but only the most incidental attention had been given to the phenomenon of political change. There had been little exploration of the problem of how the program of a newly elected party is translated into governmental policy and that into administrative action. Few could remember much of what had happened in 1933, and almost none had any recollection about the last previous transition from Democratic to Republican administrations in 1921.[2]

Transition Types

Presidential transitions occur in three different types of situation. First, the *party overturns,* when the incoming President is of a different political party from his predecessor. There have been 15 such instances, the most recent being the transfer from Harry S. Truman to Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953. Second, the *party continuations by election,* when the regularly elected successor is of the same party as his predecessor. This has happened 11 times, but not since the Coolidge-Hoover transition of 1929. Third, the *party continuations by vice-presidential succession,* following the death of a President. Truman's replacement of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1945 is the most recent of 7 such occurrences.

These transitions—33 altogether—have taken place with varying frequency over the sweep of American history. In the early years under the Federalists, the Jeffersonians, and the Jacksonians, most Presidents served for two full terms. Then the election of William Henry Harrison in 1840 opened a period of rapid turnover that lasted until the turn of the century. Several first-term Presidents failed to be re-elected, and party overturns and deaths in office were common; in the entire period only one President (Grant) served two full terms. Since 1900 the rate of presidential change has again been slower, with two-term Presidents the rule rather than the exception and Franklin D. Roosevelt setting a unique record of being elected four times and serving slightly over twelve years. Nevertheless, the twentieth century has seen four party overturns, two party continuations by election, and three vice-presidential successions. And the Twenty-second (two-term) Amendment guarantees another transition no later than January 20, 1961.

[2] Frederick C. Mosher, "Research in Public Administration: Some Notes and Suggestions," *Public Administration Review,* Vol. 16 (Summer 1956), pp. 172-73.

Choosing an Approach

Party overturns and party continuations by election could be studied and analyzed in much the same terms, with the differences between the types more likely to be matters of degree than of kind. Although they present somewhat different problems, even the adjustments following a presidential death in office have many parallels to post-inaugural adjustments. However, an initial study must be limited, for obvious practical reasons. Therefore, the research preceding this book has been concentrated on the four most recent party overturns: the Taft-Wilson transition of 1912-13, the Wilson-Harding transition of 1920-21, the Hoover-Roosevelt transition of 1932-33, and the Truman-Eisenhower transition of 1952-53. Each of these will be described in some detail. The party overturns have been selected both because they occur the most frequently and because they seem to raise the sharpest problems of leadership, continuity, and institutional adjustment. The four instances cover a sufficient time span to illustrate the evolution of the transition problem in the modern era and the growth of customs, procedures, and institutions for dealing with it; they also illustrate a variety of historical situations and provide balance between the two major parties.

A presidential transition involves such an array of people, decisions, and events that comparing four turnovers involves serious problems of choice and arrangement of data. One possibility would be to treat transitions as complex decision-making processes, analyzing and comparing them in terms of categories of variables or factors influencing the course of events. However, this is a formidable task, even for a single decision.[3] A presidential transition involves a complex series of decisions, by a shifting group of decision makers, extending over a considerable period of time. Formal analysis, if possible at all, would have to be in general terms that might add little real enlightenment and lose much of the color and "feel" of inherently interesting events.

The author has concluded that it will serve his policy purposes best, as well as result in a vastly more readable book, to present the four

[3] For example, one well-known effort to reconstruct and formally analyze a single top-level foreign policy decision has extended over several years and into great complexity. The principal result of this endeavor published to date is Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige, "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 3 (December 1958), pp. 340-78.

transitions as conventional historical reconstructions. Parts Two, Three, Four, and Five describe these transitions in sequences of chapters that show the unfolding of events and decisions from election day to the maturing of the new administration, with flashbacks and jumps forward as needed for comprehension. To permit comparisons and the identification of trends, the parts are substantially parallel in subject-matter and scope. Each part closes with a short chapter summarizing the experience of that transition, making explicit comparisons with previous transitions. Part Six draws on this material for a discussion of the present state of the transition problems and the prospects for dealing with them effectively in future presidential turnovers.

PART TWO

THE TAFT–WILSON TRANSITION OF 1912-1913

"Responsible government means government by those whom the people trust, and trust at the time of decision and action."

—WOODROW WILSON

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF WOODROW WILSON

The intensive and publicly visible part of a presidential transition ordinarily begins shortly after election, when both the incoming and the outgoing Presidents are freed from the preoccupations of the campaign and can turn their thoughts to the future. This was the case on November 6, 1912, as President-elect Woodrow Wilson arose at his home in Princeton, New Jersey, to receive the congratulations of his friends and fellow-Democrats. Wilson had been prominently mentioned as a presidential possibility for over six years; he had been a serious candidate for at least two years; and it had been increasingly certain in the past several weeks that he would be elected. Yet, until now he had done relatively little by way of specific, deliberate preparation for the office he would assume only sixteen weeks later. The great tasks of getting informed on the details of the governmental situation, organizing an administration, establishing appropriate relations with political leaders in Congress and elsewhere in the country, and determining a program for his first critical weeks in office were still before him.

The statutes assign no official duties to Presidents-elect, and the lore of politics guides their activities only in a rough sort of way. Nevertheless, Wilson was not in a situation of unlimited possibilities. Transitions between administrations are phases in a continuous unfolding of political careers and events in which individual episodes have, at best, only approximate beginnings and ends. The problems Wilson faced and the way he responded to them were profoundly influenced by previous occurrences, some of them quite recent and others far back in time and beyond

Wilson's ken. A cursory review of the circumstances, men, and events that brought Wilson to the Presidency should be helpful to an understanding of the subsequent transition.

Wilson's victory ended a difficult decade for the Democratic party. Theodore Roosevelt, after inheriting the Presidency and the Republican leadership from William McKinley in 1901, had skillfully captured public attention and occupied a large area in the political center. The Democrats quarreled in frustration over the leadership and basic political orientation of their party. Reaction to the unsuccessful crusades of William Jennings Bryan in 1896 and 1900 led them to conservatism and the disastrous Parker nomination of 1904. In 1908 they again followed Bryan to the left against Roosevelt's legatee, William Howard Taft, and again failed. The unhappy Democrats seemed to have an almost impossible set of requirements. They needed a leader with appeal for the agrarians of the West and South but not too deeply tinged with Populism, greenbackery, and Bryanism; a man progressive enough to match Roosevelt's appeal to the reform element but still conservative enough to hold the southern fundamentalists and the northern businessmen who could finance campaigns; a candidate personally attractive and unbossed but safe enough to satisfy the party organization men who had made much of the "personal dictatorship" of Roosevelt.

The unifying leader the Democrats finally found was born in Virginia in 1856, the son of a Presbyterian minister. After a boyhood in the South, he went to college at Princeton and to law school at the University of Virginia. He spent an unhappy year in law practice, then entered graduate study of politics, history, and economics at the Johns Hopkins University. After he received his doctorate in 1885, he taught first at Bryn Mawr, then at Wesleyan University, and finally joined the Princeton faculty in 1890. A prolific writer and effective lecturer, he rose rapidly in the academic world. In 1902, at age 45, Woodrow Wilson became president of Princeton. At first he was brilliantly successful, but after a few years he began to encounter increasing resistance to his policies among the faculty, alumni, and trustees. By 1910, frustrated and at a standstill, he resigned to run for governor of New Jersey. Success in this post led him to the Presidency two years later.[1]

[1] Of the historical and biographical sources used in preparing this chapter, two works have been especially useful: (1) the long-standard, authorized biography by Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters,* 8 vols. (1927-39), which will be cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson,* with the relevant volume and page citation; and (2)

Among those who gathered around Wilson that morning after election in 1912 was a young man named William F. McCombs, who was the President-elect's campaign manager and chairman of the Democratic National Committee. McCombs had come out from New York to open discussions of the next steps to be taken. Specifically, he had brought a list of men who had rendered distinguished service to the Wilson candidacy and some suggestions about the cabinet and other posts with which they might be rewarded. But from all accounts, the talk was a painful experience for both Wilson and McCombs. Wilson was completely unwilling to consider the subject McCombs had in mind. According to McCombs' bitter account, written several years later, Wilson asked his stenographer to remain in the room to record the interview. Then he said: "Before we proceed, I wish it clearly understood that I owe you nothing." When McCombs protested that he was entitled to at least a little credit, Wilson said: "Whether you did little or much, remember that God ordained that I should be the next President of the United States. Neither you nor any other mortal or mortals could have prevented that."[2]

To explain such an attitude of a President-elect toward his campaign manager, it is necessary to go back and trace the steps in his achievement of power.

EMERGENCE OF A PROGRESSIVE

The foundations of Wilson's political career were laid in the early years of his presidency of Princeton. His position gave him many opportunities to speak and write on public affairs to influential audiences. In addition to academic comment on political matters, he occasionally had things to say about the state of the Democratic party, which he had sup-

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the two available volumes in Arthur S. Link's projected multi-volume biography, *Wilson: The Road to the White House* (1947), and *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956).

In general, specific citations will not be made when the text relies on generally known or readily available biographical or historical material, but they will be used to identify quotations, to support possibly controversial or unconventional interpretations, or when special reliance has been put on a single or unusual source.

[2] William F. McCombs, *Making Woodrow Wilson President* (1921), p. 208. In telling his tale, McCombs probably exaggerated. *Cf.* Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* p. 5; Baker, *Wilson, III,* p. 414. Nevertheless, the biographers agree that Wilson brusquely rejected McCombs' overtures that morning and that he could on occasion behave in a sternly self-righteous manner.

ported since his southern boyhood. It is not certain when or by whom Wilson's political potentialities were first glimpsed, but he first received nationwide attention in the spring of 1906 through a publicity campaign by Colonel George Harvey, publisher of *Harper's Weekly* and the *North American Review*. Harvey presented Wilson as a man of learning and statesmanship, a sensible conservative, a potential presidential candidate who could challenge the formidable Roosevelt, unify the Democrats of the North and South, and—above all—provide an alternative to the disastrous leadership of Bryan.

Edging into Politics

Like many a professor of political science, Wilson had occasionally thought of going into politics but had never done anything about it. Preoccupied with his academic career, he had never been active in party organizations or campaigning; his knowledge of politics was entirely from the outside. The buildup by Harvey, whom he barely knew, was intriguing but a little embarrassing, and at first Wilson tried to pass it off as of no consequence. However, as the publicity continued, Wilson grew more interested. Without committing himself either publicly or privately, he accepted more speaking engagements and began to show other symptoms of availability. He was interested in and prominently mentioned for the United States Senate in 1907 and for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1908, but did not reach the point of an open candidacy. Bryan's third defeat opened the competition for Democratic leadership wider than ever. In 1910, with the Republican party falling apart and Democratic stock on the rise, Wilson was ready.

In its early stages, the Wilson movement was clearly an activity of the right wing of the Democratic party. Harvey, a prominent conservative spokesman, was encouraged in his pro-Wilson activity by a group that included Thomas Fortune Ryan, August Belmont, and other well-known "Wall Street Democrats." Harvey's greatest response came from editors and politicians interested in displacing Bryan and establishing "safe" leadership in the party. And at first the man and the movement were quite compatible. Wilson's basic theories of politics and economics were essentially conservative. When he discussed public affairs, he could be counted on to criticize Bryan and Roosevelt, embrace orthodox solutions to current problems, and denounce radical tinkering with the economy and the Constitution.

A Progressive Governor

Yet Wilson had, from the beginning, some characteristics that eventually led him away from political conservatism. His deepest commitments were religious and ethical. In practice, this made him a moralist sensitive to evidences of injustice or abuse of power. During the years from 1906 to 1910, still considering himself a conservative and so labeled by others, Wilson gradually drifted toward the progressives. In his speeches he began to refer to the evils of abuse of political and economic power, and abated his early objections to governmental actions designed to maintain equality of opportunity. He became identified with civil service reform and with municipal reform through the short ballot. After 1907, conflict with conservative forces in his administration of Princeton hastened his identification with progressives and reformers. Hardly realizing what he was doing, Wilson rode the wave of progressivism that swept over the country in that decade.

Overlooking the evolution of his protégé's ideas, Colonel Harvey persuaded the New Jersey Democratic bosses that they could win the governorship with Wilson in 1910 and perhaps become the President-makers of 1912. The nomination was offered on a platter, and Wilson, by then in a dead end at Princeton, accepted it.

In the course of a winning campaign, Wilson emerged as a progressive. Soon after taking office, he broke with the party leaders who had sponsored his nomination. Organizing the Democratic rank and file and appealing to the insurgents of both parties, he led the previously reactionary and corrupt state legislature in the enactment of reform legislation that attracted wide attention.

The same year that Wilson won the governorship, the Democrats won control of Congress for the first time in many years. The Taft administration was floundering and Democratic presidential prospects for 1912 were rising. Wilson was by then well known in the East, South, and Midwest. Wilson-for-President groups popped up spontaneously in a number of cities early in 1911; the situation was right for organizing a national movement. Colonel Harvey had of course been building up to this for years. But, ironically, the New Jersey record that brought Wilson new prominence had alienated the circles to which Harvey had been appealing, and the incipient organization fell apart rapidly. Harvey continued to support Wilson editorially, but personal relations between the two were uneasy.

A New Wilson Movement

As the Harvey group dissolved, a new one emerged in its place. William F. McCombs and Walter F. McCorkle, both New York lawyers, and Walter Hines Page, editor of *The World's Work* magazine, comprised the nucleus. The three were linked to each other and to Wilson by various ties; McCombs had been a student of Wilson's at Princeton, and Page was a friend of long standing. But the most obvious bond was that all were from the South and highly conscious of that fact.[3] The three backers raised $3,000 among them and financed Wilson in a "nonpolitical" speaking trip to the West Coast, which turned out highly successfully. A Wilson publicity office was opened in New York in the summer and in Washington later in 1911.[4] Others were added to the group, including another southerner rising rapidly in the New York business world—William Gibbs McAdoo, who had just successfully opened the Hudson tubes. McCombs, who was a tireless fund-raiser and seemed to have the most time and money of his own to put into the enterprise, gradually emerged as the leader and began to approach Democratic politicians in the various states.[5]

During the summer and fall of 1911, Wilson made speeches in the East and South designed to capitalize on his southern connections and to strengthen him among the progressive Democrats. The idea was to cultivate the still-powerful Bryan but not go so far left as to endanger his

[3] All had been active in a group known as the Southern Society of New York; McCorkle was then its president.

[4] The New York office was headed by Frank P. Stockbridge, who had accompanied Wilson and handled publicity on the western trip. (Frank Parker Stockbridge, "How Woodrow Wilson Won His Nomination," *Current History,* Vol. 20, July 1924, pp. 561-72.) The Washington office was headed by Thomas J. Pence, correspondent of Josephus Daniels' *Raleigh News and Observer.* Louis Brownlow, also a Washington correspondent at that time, recalls that he, Pence, and several others had begun informally disseminating Wilson propaganda shortly after Wilson was elected governor. Early in 1911 they began to receive direct encouragement from Wilson and to make headway with a few of the progressive Democrats in Congress. Personal interview, Louis Brownlow, April 26, 1960.

[5] McCombs, *op. cit.,* pp. 34-35. In view of the subsequent break between McCombs and Wilson it is interesting to note that even from McCombs' emotional account it emerges clearly that Wilson did not deliberately choose McCombs to organize the movement; McCombs took the initiative and put Wilson in a position in which he could hardly decline. And according to Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House,* p. 335, it was not until much later, when McCombs had emerged as *de facto* leader, that he was formally designated by Wilson as campaign manager. Another useful account, a valuable corrective to the paranoiac tale of McCombs, is Maurice F. Lyons, *William F. McCombs: The President Maker* (1922). Lyons was McCombs' secretary during this period.

support among moderate Democrats of the East. By the end of the year, there were Wilson-for-President movements in most of the states, headed in some cases by politicians of recognized power and status. McCombs scoured New York City and the Princeton alumni lists for contributions. A significant addition to the inner circle of strategists was Colonel Edward M. House, lately of Austin, Texas.

Crisis and Survival

In January 1912, the Wilson candidacy survived two crises. The first was the publication of the now famous Joline letter, in which Wilson, in 1907, had written to a Princeton trustee: "Would that we could do something at once dignified and effective to knock Mr. Bryan once for all into a cocked hat." The letter was released by Wilson's enemies on the eve of a Jackson Day dinner in Washington at which he and the other presidential prospects for 1912 were to appear for inspection by the assembled party elders, including Bryan. At first this seemed to nullify the year's work that Wilson's friends had put into cultivating Bryan and his supporters. However, skillful mediation by Josephus Daniels, a North Carolina editor and Democratic leader who was a principal link between Wilson and the Bryanites, softened Bryan's resentment. Then at the Jackson Day dinner Wilson proved his political potency to the party leaders with a speech that stirred the audience and effectively served as an apology and testimonial to Bryan without specifically mentioning the Joline letter.

The second crisis of early 1912 was a break between Wilson and the original Wilson man, Colonel Harvey. In the presence of another famous editor, "Marse Henry" Watterson of Louisville, Harvey asked Wilson to tell him frankly if his continued support was in any way embarrassing the Wilson movement. Wilson admitted that it was; progressive Democrats were suspicious of anyone with Harvey backing. Harvey did not seem to take it amiss at the moment, but he soon took down the Wilson slogan from the masthead of *Harper's Weekly,* and he and Watterson described the incident to others in a way that made Wilson appear an ingrate who would drop his friends if it seemed politically expedient. Wilson tried privately to smooth it over, but Harvey would not be appeased. For several weeks there were charges and countercharges between friends of the two men. The affair was finally ventilated by publication of the relevant Harvey-Wilson correspondence. As a result, the

break between Wilson and the Wall Street Democrats became public and complete; Wilson became increasingly acceptable to the progressives.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1912

Although Wilson was by now the front runner, three others were preparing serious bids for the Democratic nomination. The first was Judson Harmon, once a member of President Cleveland's cabinet and in 1912 governor of Ohio; Harmon's appeal was to the conservative eastern wing of the party. The second was Oscar Underwood of Alabama, Democratic floor leader in the House of Representatives, who represented southern conservatism. The third was Champ Clark of Missouri, Speaker of the House of Representatives, who had a mixture of supporters that included many of the congressional leaders, several northern city machines, and many agrarians of the West, South, and border states, who had not yet been persuaded that the intellectual Wilson was a suitable heir to the Bryan tradition.

During the spring of 1912 Wilson lost his commanding position. His opponents benefited from a violent anti-Wilson campaign led by the Hearst press. The publicity emphasized the less appealing side of Wilson's personality and flaunted—often distorted—statements from his conservative past that might hurt him with the progressives and the nationality groups. In the primaries and state conventions, Underwood held the Southeast, and Harmon won several state delegations. But Clark, who had the inside track with the Democratic organization men in most parts of the country, gained strength at an alarming rate. Wilson won enough delegates to be a serious contender, but as the national convention opened in Baltimore he had only 248 pledged or instructed delegates to Clark's 436. Furthermore, there were understood to be enough uninstructed or "favorite son" delegates prepared to break for Clark at the first opportunity to give the Speaker well over a majority. Under the Democratic convention rules, it took two thirds to make a nomination, but no candidate since the Civil War had been stopped after achieving a majority.

The Baltimore Convention

Wilson's nomination was achieved in one of the longest and most

bitterly fought conventions in Democratic party history. When the voting started, the main contenders maintained their relative strengths until the tenth ballot, when the big, Tammany-controlled New York delegation shifted from Harmon to Clark. This gave Clark over 50 per cent of the votes, but the Wilson and Underwood forces, by mutual agreement, held fast and prevented a band wagon movement. Bryan meanwhile had been forcing the progressive-conservative issue with a series of convention resolutions aimed at the Wall Street Democrats and Tammany Hall. The effect had been to smoke out the conservatives and to tag Wilson clearly as the progressive candidate. When Tammany shifted to Clark, Bryan announced that he could not support the bosses' candidate. Although instructed for Clark by the Nebraska primary, he switched to Wilson, pulling considerable delegate strength in his wake.

Then followed a long stalemate. McCombs, who was Wilson's manager at the convention, advised him to withdraw, but McAdoo and others persuaded him to stay. On the thirtieth ballot, Wilson picked up the votes of Indiana, which had previously been given to its favorite son, Governor Thomas Riley Marshall. This gave him the lead, but Underwood held tight to over 120 delegates and prolonged the deadlock. On the forty-third ballot, Roger Sullivan, the Illinois boss, switched most of his delegation from Clark to Wilson, giving Wilson a majority. Finally, on the forty-sixth ballot, Underwood released his delegates and Wilson was nominated.

The vice-presidential nomination went to Marshall, in fulfillment of a deal McCombs had made to get the Indiana votes. Wilson apparently did not know this and tried unsuccessfully to interest Underwood in the nomination; he reluctantly agreed to Marshall on the advice of his managers.[6]

After the nominations, the convention adopted a platform in the Bryan progressive tradition. It opposed the protective tariff and Republican proposals for a centralized banking system, and promised vigorous antitrust action. Constitutional amendments providing for the income tax, direct election of senators, and a single term for the President were proposed. There was a strong prolabor plank, a declaration for Philippine independence as soon as possible, and other proposals for reform.[7]

[6] Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House,* pp. 462-63; McCombs, *op. cit.,* p. 177.
[7] Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House,* p. 463.

Republican Split

Events on the Republican side during the rise of Wilson were all to the Democrats' advantage. President Taft, elected in 1908 with the full endorsement of Theodore Roosevelt, had fared badly almost from the start. The special session of Congress he called shortly after his inauguration to propose tariff amendments ended in a fight between the conservative, eastern protectionists of the Republican party and the progressive, insurgent wing of the West and Midwest. The coalition that Roosevelt had been able to hold together broke up rapidly on the tariff, money, conservation, and other issues. In 1910 the Republicans lost control of Congress. After Roosevelt's return from his famous African expedition, coolness set in between him and Taft, leading gradually to an open break. Both were candidates for the presidential nomination in 1912. At the convention, Taft was able to prevail through his control of the national party machinery and the federal patronage. Roosevelt and his supporters bolted the convention and, after a period of indecision in which it seemed that most of them might endorse Wilson, met in August to form the Progressive party and nominate Roosevelt. The stage was set for a three-cornered contest.

Wilson's Campaign Organization

After the Baltimore convention, the Wilsonians rallied at the governor's shore cottage at Sea Girt, New Jersey, where Wilson had awaited the outcome. One by one, most of the other Democratic leaders and candidates for the nomination came to greet the nominee—some of them to meet him for the first time—and to pledge their support.[8] In the course of long conferences, the campaign organization was shaped.

Wilson's first problem was McCombs. It was then, as now, the prerogative of the nominee to name his personal choice for chairman of the national party committee and manager of the entire national campaign. McCombs now expected to receive this office, and most of the Democratic leaders felt that he had earned it by his arduous efforts to secure

[8] Excellent relations were established with the Underwood group and with such organization leaders as Taggart of Indiana and Sullivan of Illinois, who had thrown support to Wilson at critical moments. Peace also was made with Tammany. The main holdout was Champ Clark; although he made a trip to Sea Girt and his friends were courted by the Wilson group, he remained bitter and aloof.

the nomination. But Wilson had little confidence in McCombs, who had become his manager as much by accident as by deliberate choice. He was uncomfortable in dealing with McCombs, whom he thought far too conservative on policy matters and also too willing to engage in politics-as-usual with reactionary and self-seeking elements of the party. Wilson had far more confidence in McAdoo, the other most available member of the inner circle.[9] Furthermore, by now McCombs' physical condition was such that it was doubtful he would be able to last until November. But despite his misgivings, Wilson had no easy way to explain a departure from the normal practice, and after several days of indecision he announced his preference for McCombs, which was duly ratified by the national committee in mid-July.

Wilson did, however, dictate the choice of the campaign committee. Overruling McCombs, who wanted a steering group broadly representative of all Democratic factions, he insisted on a central group composed mainly of progressive, pre-Baltimore Wilsonians. To McCombs' disgust, he also designated McAdoo as vice-chairman in charge of the New York headquarters.[10]

Conduct of the Campaign

The Democratic campaign officially opened at Sea Girt on August 7, with the traditional notification ceremony and acceptance speech by the candidate. Wilson made a long, plank-by-plank analysis of the Baltimore platform. However, in view of later events, it was significant that he skipped over the plank calling for exemption of American coastwise shipping from Panama Canal tolls, and the one advocating limiting the President to one term.

[9] A contest between McCombs and McAdoo for the inside track with Wilson had already begun. Put to bed by a doctor at Baltimore immediately after the convention, McCombs refused to stay down and hurried to Sea Girt to make sure he was not left out. McCombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 ff.

[10] In addition to McCombs and McAdoo, other Wilson men on the campaign committee were Robert S. Hudspeth of New Jersey, Josephus Daniels of North Carolina, Willard Saulsbury of Delaware, A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania, Joseph E. Davies of Wisconsin, Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma, and Albert S. Burleson of Texas. Senator James A. Reed of Missouri was put on the committee to placate Champ Clark, and two or three others were added for geographic rather than factional representation. In addition to membership on the campaign committee, most of these men also had operating responsibilities in the campaign. Burleson was in charge of speakers; Gore of organization; Daniels of publicity; Davies of Chicago headquarters, etc. Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House*, pp. 481-82.

Wilson began the campaign with rather positive ideas about the need for dignified conduct by presidential candidates and leaned toward a front porch type of campaign, but his managers soon had him stumping the country and making speeches at the whistle stops. His speech-making style also changed gradually. In the early weeks he took a calm, professorial approach to the issues, making a favorable contrast to the emotional personal appeals of Roosevelt. As the campaign progressed and Wilson began to get the feel of his audiences, he opened up with increasingly indignant, vehement denunciations of the forces of economic and political inequality, and made eloquent appeals to the country to join him in establishing the New Freedom of opportunity for all. He outdid Roosevelt in his denunciation of trusts and monopolies,[11] made a triumphant tour of the West culminating in a love-feast with Bryan in the Commoner's home town, and handled his relations with Tammany Hall and the New Jersey Democratic organization so as to emphasize his freedom from the bosses. All in all, he made effective contact with the American public and established himself as an authentic progressive leader.

Between speaking tours Wilson spent most of his time at home at Princeton, or in the governor's office at Trenton. He made occasional trips to New York City to keep in touch with McCombs and other officials at campaign headquarters but dealt with the details of the campaign mostly at second hand.[12] Publicity men and various party officials accompanied him on his campaign trips, but he did not accumulate a big personal staff. His principal aide was Joseph P. Tumulty, a young Newark lawyer who had been his secretary since the gubernatorial race of 1910.

[11] Using material supplied by Louis D. Brandeis and others, Wilson insisted that the federal government must take drastic steps to restore competition in all economic affairs; he distinguished his position from that of Roosevelt, who was more inclined to accept trusts and monopolies and attempt to tame them through regulation—inevitably self-defeating, according to Wilson. Wilson put more emphasis on the monopoly issue as the campaign went on.

[12] Raymond B. Fosdick relates an aspect of the campaign that illustrates both Wilson's reformist tendencies and his capacity to accomplish secondary objectives in a quiet way by placing trusted individuals in strategic spots. Fosdick, an ex-student of Wilson's, was recruited by the nominee and installed as secretary and auditor of the finance committee of the National Committee. "At Wilson's direction we introduced a strict budget system, with lines of accountability definitely established, and with periodic audits. I am quite sure that our methods came as a shock to the old guard of the Democratic party." Raymond B. Fosdick, "Personal Recollections of Woodrow Wilson," in Quincy Wright, ed., *Lectures and Seminar in Celebration of the Centennial of Woodrow Wilson* (1956), pp. 12-13.

Events soon showed that Wilson's misgivings about McCombs had been well founded. Early in the campaign the national chairman collapsed altogether and had to be packed off to a sanitarium for several weeks. McCombs was so jealous of McAdoo, who was by now the strong man of the organization, that although seriously ill, he returned and tried to reassert control. The resulting quarrel created an open split in the inner group. Meanwhile Wilson himself was placing increasing reliance on the counsel of Colonel House. The Texan held no formal position in the campaign, but was a man of leisure and in everyone's confidence; Wilson found in him precisely the sort of discreet, self-effacing political friend and adviser he had long been needing.

ELECTION AND AFTERMATH

Early in the campaign it became apparent that Taft was out of the running and that the real contest was between Wilson and Roosevelt. But with the hard core of conservative Republicans clinging to Taft, and Wilson holding both the conservative and progressive Democrats, Roosevelt was in a difficult position. By mid-October Wilson was the heavy favorite.

On election day, November 5, the people performed according to expectations. Wilson, although not winning a popular majority, won 435 electoral votes; Roosevelt got 88, and Taft only 8. The Democrats consolidated their hold on the House of Representatives, and enough state legislatures due to elect United States senators the following year went Democratic to ensure Democratic control of both houses in the next Congress.

The National Situation

As of the day after election there were plenty of national problems but no national emergencies; the outlook was for a quiet withdrawal by Taft and his associates and a leisurely assumption of power by a new administration. The international situation, for example, was not unduly threatening. There was bitter fighting as the Balkan Allies pushed the Turkish empire back toward the Bosporus, but this was considered remote from American interests. There was, to be sure, a certain amount of unrest in Central America and the Caribbean. The Marines were

maintaining order in Nicaragua, where they had been, on and off, since 1909. In Mexico, President Francisco Madero was rapidly losing the support of the army and was unable to restrain revolutionary chieftains operating in several regional strongholds. However, all this seemed fairly normal at the time. Americans were far more interested in the fact that the Panama Canal was almost finished—a symbol of hemispheric leadership and expanding trade.

Post-election calm settled over the domestic scene. Many groups had serious economic grievances, and an alarmist might read threats to the established order into some of Wilson's campaign speeches, but the country as a whole was prosperous and optimistic. It seemed a relief, after two years of bitter partisan and factional strife, to get a national decision. The Taft administration, which was (or had been made to appear) a reversion to Old Guard Republicanism, had been rejected. The strength shown by Wilson and Roosevelt made it clear that progressivism had, in at least a rough way, been accepted by most of the country.[13] In a sense the election seemed a triumph for both progressivism and moderation. The public could not tell exactly where Wilson stood on the political spectrum; originally launched in politics as a conservative, he had been moving steadily to the left. On the whole he appeared progressive but not radical. Many people considered it fortunate that the country had gone for the rational and respectable Wilson rather than the capricious personal leadership of Roosevelt or the unsound western radicalism of Bryan. Taft and Roosevelt consoled themselves with the thought that the lesser evil had been chosen; each felt that he had saved the country from the other. Victory and the anticipated pleasures of office holding sustained the campaign harmony of the Democrats. As so often happens, the election returns opened an interlude of political good feeling.

The "Good Loser"

President Taft himself set the tone for the outgoing administration on November 16, in an address to the Lotus Club, a prominent group in New York City. His subject: the Presidency. Taft's wry good humor after a resounding defeat charmed the audience. He made no attempt to reopen the controversies that had plagued his administration, saying

[13] Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (1954), p. 22.

only that he had few regrets about his own conduct. As to the office, Taft emphasized the political limitations that offset presidential power. He commented on several reforms affecting the Presidency that were being widely discussed at the time. A six-year term, with the incumbent ineligible for re-election, he thought would be desirable. It would also be beneficial if cabinet members could be given seats in Congress. Further extensions of the classified civil service would increase administrative efficiency and reduce legislative-executive friction. But he could see no point in the proposal that ex-Presidents be nonvoting members of the Senate—chloroform could provide a more merciful oblivion. As retiring Presidents both before and since have done, Taft sought to rise above personal and partisan feelings to stress the importance and dignity of the Presidency. He had been introduced with the usual toast: "To the President of the United States." He gallantly responded: "To the Next President of the United States." The speech was favorably publicized all over the country, laying the foundation for Taft's place in history as the good loser.[14]

Wilson the Unknown

Taft's successor was also in New York that day, but he was not at the Lotus Club. Paying little attention to McCombs or most of the others who pressed forward with advice, Wilson boarded a ship for Bermuda and a month's vacation. He was playing a role made familiar by his predecessors: He was the President-elect; widely known but yet an unknown quality; receiving great deference but with his powers still only potential. The sympathy and imagination of the nation were focused on this man in the shadow of enormous responsibilities. His friend Page, who saw him on the eve of his departure, tried to capture some of the situation's drama:

> Will he do it? Can he do it? Can anybody do it? How can we help him do it? Now that the task is on him, does he really understand? Do I understand him and he me? There's a certain unreality about it.

[14] *New York Times* (Nov. 17, 1912). Andrew Carnegie, who was present, was so impressed that he promptly volunteered to rescue Taft and all future ex-Presidents from senatorial or other oblivion with annual pensions of $25,000. Taft made no public statement but let it be known that he would not feel free to accept such a pension, and Carnegie dropped the subject. Carnegie possibly was only hoping to stimulate Congress to take action. If so, his success was limited; there was outraged oratory about his arrogance, and a bill was introduced, but it sank without a trace. See *New York Times* (Nov. 21, 1912), and succeeding issues.

The man himself—I find that nobody quite knows him now. Alas! I wonder if he quite knows himself. Temperamentally quite shy, having lived too much alone and far too much with women (how I wish two of his daughters were sons!) this Big Thing having descended on him before he knew or was quite prepared for it, thrust into a whirl of the duties that press, knowing the necessity of silence, surrounded by small people. . . .

. . . . . .

And he talks—generalities to the public. Perhaps that's all he can talk now. Wise? Yes. But does he know the men about him? Does he really know men? Nobody knows. Thus 'twixt hope and fear I see—suspense.[15]

[15] Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page* (1923), Vol. 1, pp. 121, 123.

CHAPTER 3

WILSON THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Wilson was in no mood to begin thinking about the future immediately after election day. The rigors of campaigning were probably less severe in his time than in our own, but he had been in hard pursuit of the Presidency for over a year. He felt an acute need for rest and some time to himself, for a pause to shift his mental gears for what lay ahead. But the world would not wait, and Wilson had ten hectic days before he could slip off to Bermuda.

CONTAINING THE PRESSURE

William F. McCombs, arriving with his cabinet slate on the morning after election, symbolized the pressures. Wilson saw as few people as possible, but Democratic party figures, personal friends, well-wishers, and self-seekers pursued him with advice, and some could not be denied. It was, indeed, time to begin thinking about a cabinet. The gubernatorial office he still held had been neglected during the campaign, and a legislative session was coming up in January. Congressmen demanded to know if he was planning to call a special session after inauguration. There was a flood of mail—over fifteen thousand letters and telegrams in the first few days. Reporters swarmed around and, when unable to get information, filed stories full of fanciful speculations that alternately amused and irritated him.

Wilson probably had foreseen for some time a need to put McCombs

firmly at arm's length, but his abrupt rejection of the campaign manager the morning after election reflected his instinctive reaction to the total situation. He would be his own man, he would not be pressured, he would defer decisions until the time was right, and then he would make them himself. His first public statement, issued on November 7 in an attempt to dampen down speculation (and possibly to undercut McCombs and other associates who had the habit of talking expansively to reporters), emphasized that the cabinet posts were still unassigned and that the rumors going around might as well be disregarded.[1]

The next few days were put into organizing a holding operation. Several friends pitched in to help, and extra clerks were hired to handle the mail. They put the important pieces aside for Wilson's attention, and his aide, Tumulty, devised a series of form letter replies for the remainder. Wilson authorized Page and a few other trusted friends to go ahead with policy memoranda on various subjects and asked Colonel House to begin investigating the availability of some of the most obvious cabinet prospects. Just before leaving for Bermuda he made statements on two of the subjects on which reporters were pressing him. First, he would stay on as governor of New Jersey and work with the legislature to convene in January in hope of completing his reform program.[2] Second, he intended to call a special session of Congress soon after inauguration to consider tariff legislation.[3]

The island vacation was a success. Wilson's party consisted only of his family, a secretary, and a few reporters and secret service men. Cere-

[1] He said: "No announcement will have the least authority unless made over my own signature. These are matters which must be determined by very deliberate council and not by gossip." Rather than come to him, reporters "might as well go ask the Sphinx." *New York World* (Nov. 8, 1912).

[2] "I will stay on the job . . . until we put through the reforms that we have promised." Quoted by Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956), p 29. In addition to the hope of legislation, remaining until the new legislature convened was a solution to the gubernatorial succession problem. On Wilson's resignation the president of the state senate, elected by the members of that body, would become governor. The current senate was Republican-controlled, but the new one to be sworn in in January would be Democratic.

[3] He had been expected to do this, inasmuch as all newly installed Presidents within recent memory had called special sessions to avoid the long wait for Congress to convene in December. However, he stalled off the reporters and avoided a commitment until just before leaving for Bermuda, saying that he was waiting to be sure of Democratic sentiment. The newspapers made informal polls of Democratic congressmen and collected evidence of grass roots support, then congratulated themselves for having influenced Wilson's decision. *New York World* (Nov. 16, 1912); *New York Times* (Nov. 16, 1912).

monial and social affairs were kept to a minimum. Wilson spent a few hours a day on the memoranda and letters he had brought along, dictating notes of thanks to some of his supporters. A later ship brought the proofs of a book assembled from his campaign speeches; he corrected them and wrote an introduction. There was also additional correspondence from House and Tumulty. This was a light schedule compared to the previous months, and Wilson had time to rest, to read, and to take bicycle rides about the island. For five days the cable was out of order, and he had no communication with the outside world, which pleased him very much.

WILSON'S CHARACTERISTICS

This is a convenient point to assess briefly some of the strengths and weaknesses of the President-elect. At the time, much was made of his political inexperience—perhaps too much, in view of the years he had spent testing the political water before plunging in. Wilson's strenuous efforts to reform Princeton had also been relevant experience of a sort. Nevertheless, it was but two years since his first campaign for a public office. Despite an intensive political education in the meantime, he still found much of the everyday business of seeing the public, handling patronage, and routine political negotiating quite distasteful; he preferred to leave all but the most important matters to people like Tumulty and McCombs.[4] It also was true that his personal acquaintance with politicians, especially those who performed in the national arena at Washington, was limited.

Speculation about Wilson's personality and motivations had already begun. Apparently, he could be charming when dealing with people in relationships that had a touch of impersonality about them, or when roles were well established; but he rarely relaxed completely except among a few intimate friends. His manner was often uncomfortably stiff; he had little patience with small talk or shallow people. His perceptions of the world and of his own place in it were essentially religious; a strong sense of duty and destiny made him bold, courageous, and stubbornly immovable when he felt that he was right. This identi-

[4] Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House* (1947), pp. 269-70, 370; John M. Blum, *Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era* (1951), pp. 27-37.

fication of his own career with the will of God gave him both personal and political strength, in an era when the righteous Calvinist preacher was a familiar image to most Americans. To Wilson, it seemed that he must do what his higher mission required, even though his actions might be hard on others or difficult to explain by conventional standards of personal or political conduct. To Wilson's opponents, his capacity for explaining expedient behavior in terms of higher principles smacked of calculated, self-seeking hypocrisy. At any rate, Wilson had will and courage that made him a tough political fighter. These same characteristics also made him rigid, insistent on having his own way once his mind was made up, and often uncharitable toward those who opposed him.[5]

Aside from his personality, Wilson had many assets and skills to contribute to a successful Presidency. He had a penetrating, problem-solving intelligence, operating against a background of learning and intellectual activity unrivaled by any President since at least the second Adams. His studies in history, jurisprudence, and politics gave him broad understanding of governmental processes and quite specific ideas on a variety of subjects, ranging from the reforming gadgetry of his day to the sophisticated concepts of presidential behavior embodied in his celebrated book, *Constitutional Government.* For over a decade he had been active in the circles inhabited by university presidents; he knew a great many of the leading men of his time and had at least a superficial knowledge—acquired for speech-making purposes—of most of the public issues. He was a superb speaker who could inflame a mass meeting or persuade a small group in a closed room. He was also an experienced executive, familiar with papers, memoranda, conferences, and other techniques of organizational leadership. He tackled problems in a brisk way that inspired confidence in his associates. He was incredibly disciplined and efficient in his personal work habits, perhaps inclined to take on too much himself, but also able to get minor things done by dropping hints to others. In general he held tight to the details of what he considered major matters and gave his subordinates wide latitude in everything else.

[5] Alexander and Juliette George, in their "psychological biography" of Wilson, emphasize his insecure boyhood under the shadow of a stern, demanding father, in an atmosphere of rigid Calvinism. In this experience they find a principal source of such behavioral tendencies as his compulsion to dominate situations, his craving for uncritical admiration, his constant search for moral justifications, and his fury when others blocked his projects. *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (1956), especially Chaps. 1 and 7, and "Research Note," pp. 317-22.

BACK TO WORK

Wilson returned from his vacation on December 16 to face his responsibilities as governor of New Jersey and as President-elect. Despite the nearness of his presidential duties, he was in no hurry to liquidate his old obligations.

Holding on in New Jersey

His enemies were gleeful over his imminent departure, and New Jersey Democratic legislators already had begun to show signs of pre-Wilsonian behavior. Wilson was too much the fighter to quit at this point. The day of his return he reiterated his statement that he was not through in New Jersey, and he and Tumulty plunged into a round of caucuses and conferences to secure control in the legislative session to open the next month. During January and February, with inauguration day ever closer, Wilson continued to spend a great deal of time on state affairs. He pushed through a set of antitrust bills, but he was outlasted and outmaneuvered on constitutional reform and jury reform. Not until March 1, and then with considerable reluctance, did he turn the governorship over to the president of the senate.[6]

Facilities and Staff

Before turning to Wilson's other large area of responsibility—his presidential preparations—it may be useful to note his physical and staff facilities. Although it proved a heavy drain on his time, holding the governorship had the advantage of not forcing a temporary uprooting. Until he left for Washington, Wilson continued to make his headquarters in the governor's office at Trenton, commuting daily from Princeton. Even during the campaign he had not used the combined Wilson campaign and Democratic National Committee headquarters in New York City, preferring to do his New York business in hotel suites, clubs, or at the homes of friends. After election he apparently did not even consider establishing a headquarters in New York. Except for two brief

[6] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* Chap. 2, "Farewell to New Jersey," discusses Wilson's last-minute efforts to achieve reforms there, as well as his later unsuccessful attempts to control the state from the White House.

journeys to make speeches, he continued to shuttle between Princeton and Trenton, making one-day or overnight trips into New York once or twice a week until inauguration.

There was little change in Wilson's personal staff. For day-to-day services he continued to rely on Tumulty. The latter acquired an assistant to help supervise the clerks handling the heavy mail, and Thomas H. Birch, a staunch local supporter, was appointed a temporary military aide to help coordinate inauguration arrangements. The Wilson campaign organization played little part in his presidential preparations. McCombs took charge of setting up an inauguration arrangements committee in Washington, and other details. He also conducted a number of well-publicized conferences with party leaders about patronage distribution, but this was without Wilson's blessing; actually he was kept at arm's length and rarely consulted on policy or major appointments. Most of the other figures in the campaign organization had returned to other business after election. Some of them were later given cabinet and other appointments, but they were not put to work for Wilson prior to inauguration.

By far the most important help Wilson had at this time came from friends without official status, the leading example being Colonel House. House was rarely seen at Trenton or Princeton, but he and Wilson were in daily communication by telephone or letter, and during Wilson's frequent visits to New York he was usually in House's company if not staying at House's apartment. In the pre-inaugural period House spent most of his time working on Wilson's behalf, particularly on the cabinet appointments.[7]

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

The things a President-elect must do are nowhere defined in constitutional or statutory writing. They are determined by custom, by the contingencies of the moment, by the obvious requirements of the duties

[7] Charles Seymour, ed., *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* (1926), Vol. 1, pp. 82-90, covers the early stages of House's participation in cabinet selection. Anticipating the request, House had quietly begun canvassing the situation at least as early as October. At that time House was not well known to the public, but leading Democrats knew or suspected his intimacy with Wilson, and he soon became a target for those seeking access to Wilson.

A recent study, which attributes rather more influence to House than most Wilson biographers are wont to do, is Louis W. Koenig, *The Invisible Presidency* (1960), pp. 190-248, "Sphinx in a Soft Hat."

soon to be assumed, and by the President-elect's own perceptions of the Presidency and his place in it. Obviously, he must arrange his personal affairs for the move to Washington and make final determinations about the inaugural ceremonies. Custom also requires him to prepare (or cause to be prepared) an inaugural address and to get ready to announce his cabinet appointments—on or just before inauguration day in Wilson's time, somewhat earlier now. Also obvious, but a little less specific, are the necessities of getting informed about the details of current governmental problems and policies and of arriving at some sort of plan for fulfilling campaign pledges. Another task, real and pressing but difficult to define, is the need to establish political relationships appropriate to his new position as party leader in the Presidency. And even more diffuse is his responsibility as newly designated head of the nation, not just in a ceremonial sense but as the leader and spokesman for the entire country regardless of party. The latter two responsibilities are the most elusive and most dependent on the President-elect's personal characteristics and approach to his job. They find their expression, in large part, in the manner he goes about fulfilling his more specific responsibilities.

Wilson's Theories

Of all our latter-day Presidents, Wilson arrived in office with the clearest and best articulated concept of what the Presidency was. From his academic study and practical experience, he had developed theories that now gave him guidance. These theories have been analyzed at length elsewhere, but two familiar passages from Wilson's last major book before assuming the Presidency merit quotation:

> Greatly as the practice and influence of Presidents has varied, there can be no mistaking the fact that we have grown more and more inclined from generation to generation to look to the President as the unifying force in our complex system, the leader both of his party and of the nation. To do so is not inconsistent with the actual provisions of the Constitution; it is only inconsistent with a very mechanical theory of its meaning and intention.[8]
>
> The President is at liberty, both in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can. His capacity will set the limit; and if Congress be overborne by him, it will be no fault of the makers of the Constitution—it will be from no lack of constitutional powers on its part, but only because the President has the nation behind him, and Congress has not.[9]

[8] Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1911 ed.), p. 60.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

"The leader both of his party and of the nation"

On returning from Bermuda, Wilson lost no time in putting himself at the head "both of his party and of the nation." The evening after his return, in an address to his old friends of the Southern Society of New York, he opened a pre-inaugural campaign to rally the American people to the task of reform, particularly in the economic sphere. He appealed to businessmen to think of themselves as trustees for the nation's wealth. He commented on rumors that financial leaders would set off a panic in order to discredit him; to any such miscreants he promised "a gibbet as high as Haman."[10]

Then Wilson turned to his party. He set out to prepare himself for the Presidency in a way that would solidify his party leadership and produce a program the party could support.

The political situation was on the whole favorable to his ambitions. He had the enormous reservoir of influence within his party that is at the disposal of any President who has just led the party back to power. Wilson's nomination had been achieved by an unusual combination of factional and sectional interests, and in the course of the campaign he had strengthened himself where he had originally been weakest—among the old Populists and erstwhile supporters of Bryan in the West and South. Potentially, he was the most truly national leader the party had had in years, but to make this potential effective and carry through a legislative program, it would be necessary to establish relations with the major factions and their leaders. For example, what about Bryan? Wilson had benefited greatly from his support, and the Nebraskan had great influence among congressmen whose votes might be essential to the new administration. But despite their campaign alliance and Wilson's increasing progressivism, he still opposed many of the things Bryan stood for and had little confidence in the latter's political judgment. Wilson's principal opponents for the nomination, Champ Clark and Oscar Underwood, were probably the two most powerful men in the House of Representatives, as, respectively, speaker and majority

[10] *New York Times* (Dec. 18, 1912); Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 23-24; Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters,* Vol. III (1931), pp. 427-28. (Cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson.*) Wilson's vigorous language attracted public attention and a certain amount of reproof. He later grimly said that he meant "not a literal gibbet, because that is not painful after it has been used, but a figurative gibbet, upon which the soul quivers so long as there are persons belonging to the family who can feel ashamed."

leader. Underwood also chaired the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Throughout Congress, Democratic victory and the seniority rule had raised old-timers of conservative views to committee chairmanships. Could they be persuaded to support, or at least not to impede, the sort of program to which Wilson had pledged himself? Fortunately, the congressional oligarchs were surrounded and overwhelmed, numerically at least, by younger and more progressive men, elected in the Democratic landslides of 1910 and 1912, who would look to Wilson for leadership. Actually, most of the party leaders were thankful to be back in power, conscious of the fact that the Democrats were still a minority in the country, and anxious to make the administration a success. Wilson's problem was to establish lines of communication and organize his potential support.[11]

From Bermuda, Wilson had sent notes inviting several Democratic leaders to come to Trenton for conferences with him, and more invitations were extended on his return. From then until inauguration a steady flow of congressmen, senators, governors, mayors, national committeemen, and miscellaneous politicians who had taken especially active parts in the Wilson campaign passed through Princeton and Trenton. Bryan came first, on December 21, for several hours of frank discussion about problems and personnel of the new administration. Champ Clark came for a pleasant but less intimate interview on the 24th. There were also long talks with congressmen in key spots to influence the legislative program called for by the Democratic platform. Perhaps the most important were with Oscar Underwood, who in addition to his formal leadership of the House was the Democrats' leading spokesman on the tariff, and Carter Glass, chairman of a House Banking and Currency subcommittee that had been studying currency reform. The conferences with Underwood and Glass laid a foundation of personal acquaintance and resulted in a preliminary shaping of legislation long before inauguration. Other visitors got shorter treatment. Wilson quizzed them about the party situations in their home states, their ideas about priorities for measures to be taken up in the next Congress, or the merits of the cabinet candidates many of them had come to Trenton to promote. Most of the visitors were

[11] The astute Franklin K. Lane, who later became a Wilson cabinet member, described Wilson's problem in terms that would apply equally well to later Democratic Presidents: ". . . He has to reconcile a progressive Northern Democracy with a conservative Southern Democracy, and satisfy one with policies and another with offices." Anne W. Lane and Louise H. Wall, eds., *The Letters of Franklin K. Lane* (1922), pp. 114-15.

impressed by Wilson's intellect and his grasp of the issues. Many, however, went away frustrated because he had not confided his plans, asked them to approve measures he had in mind, or committed himself to things they had recommended. Some visitors also were hurt at being unable to penetrate Wilson's reserve. The President-elect knew the ritual he had to go through to establish himself as party leader, but he found it hard to show enthusiasm for conferences with people whose advice he did not intend to take.[12]

PROGRESSIVES PREFERRED

As he proceeded to put out his lines of communication within his party, Wilson did not pursue a policy of trying to please everyone for the sake of party harmony. The newspapers soon noted that the congressmen appearing for conferences at Trenton included mainly progressives; a number of eminent Democrats of conservative views were not being invited.

Beneath the surface of events like the visits of dignitaries, Wilson's real preparation went on. He discussed cabinet prospects with House, studied the memoranda on various subjects his friends were sending him, and corresponded with others whose advice he felt he could trust.[13] Wilson relied more on journalists, educators, and other intellectuals (Page, Norman Hapgood, Albert Shaw, former President Eliot of

[12] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 8-9, 21-22. Baker, *Wilson, III,* p. 439; *cf.* Seymour, *op. cit.,* Vol. 1, pp. 99-102.

[13] Some of this advice, if it did not actually determine Wilson's eventual course of action, must have been very helpful in confirming his own tentative judgments. For example, early in November Page advised:

"1. Call Congress in extra session mainly to revise the tariff and incidentally to prepare the way for rural credit societies.

"Mr. Taft set the stage admirably in 1909 when he promptly called an extra session; but then he let the villian run the play. To get the main job in hand at once will be both dramatic and effective and it will save time. Moreover, it will give you this great tactical advantage—you can the better keep in line those who have debts or doubts before you have answered their importunities for offices and for favours. . . .

"2. Set your trusted friends immediately to work, every man in the field he knows best, to prepare briefs for you on such great subjects and departments as the Currency, the Post Office, Conservation, Rural Credit, and Agricultural Department. . . .

"3. The President reads (or speaks) his Inaugural to the people. Why not go back to the old custom of himself delivering his Message to Congress? Would that not restore a feeling of comradeship in responsibility and make the Legislative branch feel nearer to the Executive?" Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page* (1923), Vol. 1, pp. 108-09.

Harvard, Justice Brandeis, and some of his former colleagues at Princeton) than on his campaign associates and other politicians who now sought him out. It is important to note that the preparations all centered in Wilson personally. He did not like to work through a hierarchy of staff. There was no organization, no person with the presumptive right to be asked for advice and have it accepted. Wilson asked many men for advice but revealed few of his own thoughts. As he prepared for the Presidency, there were, Page said, "no men of companionable size about him."[14]

How deliberate it was is hard to say, but Wilson's public relations policy during his preparatory period—a mixture of outspokenness and reticence—served effectively to keep the nation interested in him. In his public speeches between election and inauguration, he continued to lash out at the devils he had chastised during the campaign; his strong words shocked a good many people who seemed to expect lofty nonpartisanship from a President-elect. First came the Southern Society speech already mentioned. Then at his birthplace in Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, he warned that the forthcoming struggle was "not a rosewater affair." He said: "There are men who will have to be mastered in order that they shall be made the instruments of justice and mercy," and implied that some of the Virginia Democratic leaders were included in that group. At a gathering of businessmen in Chicago on January 11, where he had been expected to speak reassuring words to counteract the effect of the Southern Society speech, he attacked monopoly and the prevailing business ethics. Two days later, at a Democratic gathering in New Jersey, he emphasized that "progressives, and only progressives" would be chosen to serve in his administration.[15]

On the other hand, it was impossible to tell from these speeches just what Wilson intended to do. Reporters dogged his footsteps and got at least a few words with him daily, but he stubbornly refused to amplify his views or commit himself on individuals and controversial issues. There was an occasional handout of news from Tumulty, and a few times Wilson spoke to the reporters on a "not for attribution" basis, but most of the time they found it difficult to fill up their daily dispatches. Wilson often showed irritation at what they wrote in the absence of "hard" news, but this did not move him to take them—and

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[15] Baker, *Wilson, III,* pp. 424-25, and Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 23-28, discuss these speeches and the public reaction to them.

through them the public—into his confidence. In fact, he seemed to derive pleasure from being mysterious and at times revealed disdain for the whole news-scrabbling process. Despite his theories about the importance of "pitiless publicity," his press relations deteriorated.[16]

Wilson's reticence seems to have been compounded in about equal parts of not knowing what he wanted to do, of reluctance to make commitments he might later regret, and of a vague feeling about the proprieties of his situation. On the latter point, a contemporary newspaper report (one of the few out of Wilson's headquarters that seem "inspired") was revealing. It noted that as governor of New Jersey Wilson had never been lacking detailed proposals when the right time came. His characteristic method was to use public addresses to suggest the general nature of his policies, leaving the details to be set out in legislative bills, orders, or other formal papers on which action could be taken. The story hinted at Wilson's disapproval of the way Roosevelt and Taft had announced presidential policy in after-dinner speeches, in personal letters intended to "leak," and in offhand remarks to reporters; this was undignified conduct in a Chief Executive. The public need not fear that Wilson had no policies: "He intends to be perfectly clear and definite at the right time and place, but he does not regard a dinner table as the place. He does regard an official communication as the place."[17]

[16] See observations of a New Jersey newspaper editor who was relatively close to Wilson in this period, James W. Kerney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (1926), pp. 262-64.

[17] *New York Times* (Jan. 27, 1913).

CHAPTER 4

THE LAME DUCKS

While Woodrow Wilson prepared and waited in New Jersey, President Taft and Congress occupied the scene in Washington. The dominant fact was that the President and many members of the Congress were, in the traditional phrase, "lame ducks"—officials of little power, serving out terms after repudiation by the electorate.

THE TAFT ADMINISTRATION

For Taft and most of the leading members of his administration, chagrin at defeat was eased by anticipation of release from a responsibility that had become burdensome. On the whole, their conduct was dignified and statesmanlike; they sought to do their duty and complete the term with as little additional controversy as possible.

In the field of foreign affairs several important matters were pending: whether to recognize the new Chinese Republic; settlement of the long controversy with Colombia over acquisition of the Canal Zone; expiration of a basic treaty of friendship with Russia, after failure to agree on terms of its renewal; and a British protest at a recent statute exempting American coastwise shipping from paying Panama Canal tolls, when the canal opened. (The latter was alleged to be a violation of the original treaty under which the United States had obtained international agreement to proceed with the canal.) No immediate decisions or changes of

policy seemed to be required in these matters, and Taft preferred to hold steady and leave their disposition to his successor.[1]

In domestic affairs the administration was moderately active. There were a few premature resignations, but most of the higher officials stuck to their jobs, cleaning up unfinished business and even moving forward on a few matters not requiring legislation. Using the authority of the Sherman Act, the Attorney-General intervened in several railroad merger cases. The Post Office prepared to inaugurate on January 1 a new service to be called "parcel post." Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and the Chief of Staff, General Leonard Wood, pushed an internal reorganization of the Army, despite congressional grumbling. Probably the most controversial step taken after election was a new system of clearing Treasury receipts and disbursements through the banks, which was criticized by Democrats as an unnecessary venture that might interfere with their plans for currency reform, but it remained a minor issue. The year-end reports of the executive departments dwelt on the accomplishments of the Taft administration; their recommendations were mostly minor proposals for administrative tidying or reiterations of long-standing and long-ignored Taft proposals.[2]

Taft personally sought to spend his last weeks in the White House in as dignified a posture as possible. He made several genial speeches in Washington and New York. After first announcing his intention to return to Cincinnati and law practice, he received an invitation in mid-November to join the Yale law faculty, and this arrangement was worked out during the next month. The last two weeks of December he spent on an inspection trip to the Panama Canal. There was a heavy schedule of receptions and dinners at the White House, and Taft and his family were highly available for social and ceremonial functions in Washington that winter.

THE CONGRESS

But before Taft could relinquish the Presidency to Wilson, there was a final legislative session to be endured. On December 2, the Sixty-second Congress convened. This was not the Congress just elected, but the one

[1] For Taft's attitude and conduct at this time see Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, Vol. 2 (1939), p. 816 and pp. 840-55.

[2] See *New York Times* (Dec. 5, 6, 9, 1912).

elected in 1910, having its second regular session in accordance with the schedule then provided by the Constitution. Reflecting the Democratic landslide of 1910, the House of Representatives was Democratic by a sizable margin. The Senate was formally organized by the Republicans but actually controlled for legislative purposes by a coalition of Democrats and "Bull Moosers."

In the circumstances, there was no possibility of a presidentially led Republican legislative program. Taft's opening message to Congress, sent on December 3, was a restatement of his foreign policy, a defense of existing tariff levels, and a report on the establishment of a merit system in the consular service. Three days later a message on national affairs reported a Treasury surplus, recommended currency reform along lines previously suggested by the administration, expressed satisfaction with existing antitrust powers under the Sherman Act, reported the near completion of the Panama Canal, asked authorization of a special promotion for Colonel Goethals, the chief of the canal builders, and recommended caution in moving toward Philippine independence. A third message, on December 19, dealt with miscellaneous departmental matters such as the need for a budget system and further extension of the merit system. Legislation enabling cabinet members to sit in Congress, without votes, was also recommended. Communications of this type obviously were not intended to stir the political waters.[3] Congress paid little attention, and Taft made no serious effort to assert leadership.

Appointments Blocked

The cat-and-mouse game the Senate played with Taft's appointments illustrates his lack of power. The session opened with a backlog of several hundred recess appointments—military, diplomatic, postmasters, collectors of customs, judges, and a few departmental officers and commissioners in Washington—waiting to be confirmed. Additional nominations piled up early in the session until at one point there were about 3,000. At first the Republican leaders were able to call the Senate into executive session to consider appointments, but the Democrats frustrated them by forcing repeated quorum calls and debating each minor nomina-

[3] *Ibid.* (Dec. 4, 7, 20, 1912). Since the President in those days did not address Congress in person but sent messages to be read by clerks in the two Houses, his first message after the opening of the legislative session did not receive the emphasis now accorded the annual State of the Union message. Taft's first two communications were about equal in importance, with the third not far behind.

tion at great length. Later the progressive Republicans became angry over reports of retaliatory action by Taft supporters against local officeholders who had supported Roosevelt; by cooperating with the Democrats they prevented nominations from being brought up at all. Finally, toward the end of the session, the Democrats permitted the military, lower diplomatic, and consular appointments (all of which were supposed to be on a nonpartisan basis anyway) to go through. About 1,400 nominations and recess appointments, mostly of postmasters and other local officers falling within the area of congressional patronage, were never confirmed, thus leaving the offices immediately available for Democratic appointments after Wilson's inauguration. Even the special promotion for Colonel Goethals was not permitted; the Democrats wanted the honor rendered under their administration.[4]

Congress scored another triumph over the executive, which turned out to affect Wilson more than Taft, by frustrating some important attempts at administrative reform. In the last year of Taft's administration, his Commission on Economy and Efficiency, attached to the White House, had turned out several reports with recommendations for improvements in organization, personnel management, and financial methods, including a proposed national budget system.[5] Congress in the previous session had refused to approve the measures and specifically instructed that the estimates for fiscal year 1914 were to be presented in the traditional fashion. Estimates in the old form were accordingly submitted early in the short session, and Congress began a leisurely scrutiny. Attempting at least to make a demonstration for the record, Taft told the departments to prepare a separate set of estimates to be submitted as a budget under the proposed new system, but with harassment from congressional committees and stalling in some of the departments, the "executive budget" was not presented until February 26—much too late to be considered even if Congress had been so disposed.

Even at this late date the regular appropriation bills for the fiscal year beginning in July had not been passed, but they were finally muddled through, heavily laden with pork-barrel items, in the closing hours of the session. The Indian Bureau appropriation was filibustered to death

[4] This battle can be followed in almost daily newspaper stories between December and March. For an end-of-session summary, see *New York Times* (Mar. 4, 1913).

[5] Some of the accomplishments and frustrations of the commission are discussed by its chairman, Frederick A. Cleveland, *The Budget and Responsible Government* (1920), pp. 77-88 and 334-40; Gustavus A. Weber, *Organized Efforts for the Improvement of Methods of Administration in the United States* (1919), pp. 84-103.

in the Senate, and a Sundry Civil Appropriations bill carried a rider almost sure to bring a Taft veto. A final insult to administrative reform was the deletion of the appropriation to continue the Commission on Economy and Efficiency.

Needless to say, it was not a productive session in terms of substantive legislation. Toward the end of the session two important bills were passed—a new immigration bill and a bill to forbid transportation of liquor into dry states. Neither of these had been recommended by Taft; both were vetoed, and the liquor bill was passed over his veto.

Democratic Strategy

From the viewpoint of the Democrats, biding their time until March, it was not a completely wasted session, as they used their congressional power to fasten the labels of corruption and reaction on the outgoing regime and made preparations in several fields for later constructive action. Judge Archbald of the Commerce Court, who had been impeached by the House in the previous session, was tried and convicted by the Senate of using his office for personal gain through connivance with one of the railroads. A House committee headed by Congressman Arsène P. Pujo held dramatic hearings at which, by grilling J. P. Morgan, George F. Baker, and other giants of the financial world, the existence and general structure of the "money trust" were established. A subcommittee headed by Carter Glass made a more constructive attack on the same problem by holding hearings and starting to draft a currency reform bill. Oscar Underwood dusted off Democratic tariff bills that had failed in previous sessions and began working up a new bill for the special session after inauguration day. Cordell Hull, a junior congressman who had been foresighted enough to make himself an expert on income taxation, rose to prominence in January when the Sixteenth Amendment cleared enough state legislatures to open the way for inclusion of an income tax provision in the new tariff bill.

Another noteworthy event during the session was President Taft's attendance and short speech at the memorial services in the Senate for Vice President Sherman, who had died during the campaign. It was the first time the President had addressed the Senate in person since Jefferson's time and may have had some influence in Wilson's later decision to address the Senate himself on substantive business.[6]

[6] For report of the event, see *New York Times* (Feb. 16, 1913).

CHAPTER 5

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND HIS PARTY

As the days before inauguration slipped away, the realities of his position pressed ever more insistently on the President-elect. His problems took many forms, but most of them involved his political party.

Wilson could appreciate, at least theoretically, the position he was now in. Twenty years earlier he had written:

> . . . Inasmuch as, whether we wish it or not, the President is necessarily a party leader, *ex officio,* there ought to be some regular, open, responsible connection established between him and his party. He is not always, as we know, a real leader before he is chosen to his great office of leadership. It has several times happened that he was not even personally acquainted with the men by whom the policy of his party had been habitually determined before he was discovered by a popular convention. Once and again a President has come to Washington ignorant of both men and of measures. How is he to make the acquaintance of his party; how are they to learn his character and intentions? He must somehow get the confidence of the men in whom the party habitually places confidence and whom it will follow, or else he must consent to be quite impotent during his four years in everything but the mere routine of executive action.[1]

MAKING A CABINET

Wilson's ideas about the Presidency, party, and cabinet had been altered with the passing years. The young professor of politics, enamored

[1] Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd, eds., *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson: College and State* (1924), Vol. 1, pp. 218-19. Original in Woodrow Wilson, "Mr. Cleveland's Cabinet," *Review of Reviews,* Vol. 7 (April 1893), pp. 286-97.

with British institutions, could say confidently: "What we need is harmonious, consistent, responsible party government, instead of a wide dispersion of functions and responsibility; and we can get it only by connecting the President as closely as may be with his party in Congress. The natural connecting link is the cabinet."[2] In 1907, at the peak of his academic career, Wilson had a more sophisticated concept of presidential leadership. He saw the President as both party leader and people's tribune, standing a bit apart from the party and using his popular support as leverage to influence or control it. Such a President might not need to assemble a cabinet of already recognized party leaders:

> Self-reliant men will regard their cabinets as executive councils; men less self-reliant or more prudent will regard them as also political councils, and will wish to call into them men who have earned the confidence of their party. The character of the cabinet may be made a nice index of the President's theory of party government; but the one view is, so far as I can see, as constitutional as the other.[3]

His later years of controversy at Princeton and his experience as governor seemed to deepen Wilson's suspicion of institutions that might stand in the way of presidential leadership. In a 1912 campaign speech he said: "The idea of the Presidents we have recently had has been that they were Presidents of a National Board of Trustees. That is not my idea. I have been president of one board of trustees and I do not care to have another on my hands. I want to be President of the people of the United States."[4]

At any rate, Wilson selected his cabinet with several considerations in mind.[5] Party standing obviously was important, and he took care to listen to the suggestions of the leaders who paraded through Trenton and to try out various names on them. But he attached great importance to other factors, such as known or anticipated policy views, personal loyalty and compatibility, contribution to geographic balance, and standing among the men of intelligence whose views Wilson respected. Wilson also made it clear that he was not interested in men who were seeking office,

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 222. From "Mr. Cleveland as President," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 79 (March 1897), pp. 289-300.

[3] Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1911 ed.), p. 77.

[4] Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (1913), pp. 73-74.

[5] For additional discussion of Wilson's ideas on the cabinet see Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *The President's Cabinet* (1959), pp. 55-57. This volume on cabinets from Wilson to Eisenhower has been consulted frequently in the present study.

either openly or through their friends. This, of course, did not discourage the tactless, and he was swamped with futile letters and petitions on behalf of ambitious favorite sons.[6]

Distrusting National Chairman McCombs and the political professionals, Wilson turned to his personal friends for aid in choosing the cabinet. He relied especially on Colonel House. The latter spent most of his time between election and inauguration day collecting information about potential candidates, checking their availability, getting evaluations from others, and counseling Wilson on final choices.[7] But House did not have Wilson's ear exclusively. Such men as Norman Hapgood and Walter Hines Page sent memoranda on cabinet prospects directly to Wilson. Tumulty, of course, saw his chief daily and was instrumental in at least one choice. And Wilson himself wrote many notes asking his friends to evaluate particular individuals he was interested in.[8]

In one sense, Wilson had plenty of elbowroom in selecting his cabinet. The Democrats had been out of office so long that there were few leftovers from previous administrations with presumptive claims to office. Wilson did not have the friendships and obligations of a long political career. In fact, he had remarkably few of them for a short career, having always emphasized his independence even when others had felt there might be some implicit commitment. No offices had been promised in advance, either to members of the Wilson inner group or to other factions in deals for support. Political debts incurred by McCombs were not necessarily to be honored.

[6] Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956), pp. 6-7.

[7] Charles Seymour, ed., *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House,* Vol. 1 (1926), pp. 83-113. Arthur S. Link goes so far as to say that the cabinet was "mainly of House's choosing." *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (1954), p. 26.

[8] The Papers of Woodrow Wilson (cited hereafter as Wilson Papers), Library of Congress, contain useful data on the cabinet selection process. For example, there are such choice bits as a collection of opinions about Louis D. Brandeis made by Hapgood (Series II, Box 32); a roundup on possible Secretaries of Agriculture by Page (Series II, Box 28); and a letter from Supreme Court Justice Mahlon C. Pitney, a Princeton classmate of Wilson's, apparently in response to the latter's inquiry about how the Court would feel about a certain individual for Attorney General.

It might be stated at this point that the Wilson Papers, while furnishing valuable information and insights into Wilson's operations, leave a great many specific decisions or incidents unexplained. That enemy of the academic historian, the telephone, was apparently at work. (Louis Brownlow told the author that Wilson had something of a reputation for heavy use of the telephone, in an era when not all executives had become fully accustomed to its use.) Nevertheless, the prevailing methods were still old-fashioned enough that a substantial proportion of the letters in the Wilson files are hand-written.

Resolving the Bryan Problem

One Democrat, however, could not be ignored. From the beginning, it was clear to insiders and outsiders alike that Wilson would have to make a difficult decision about William Jennings Bryan. As the nation's leading Democrat until Wilson appeared on the scene, the party's three-time presidential candidate, a man with a large personal following in Congress and the country at large, and a vigorous campaign supporter, Bryan was certainly entitled to consideration. Wilson and Bryan had joined hands as progressive Democrats in 1912, and Bryan obviously considered Wilson's election a triumph of the principles he himself had long stood for, but their political antecedents were completely different. In Bryan's background were western agrarian radicalism, Populism, and greenbackery, while Wilson, a son of the conservative South and East, had been a Gold Bug in 1896. Recently, Wilson had begun to appreciate some of Bryan's personal qualities, but he still considered him shallow, demagogic, and lacking in judgment. Putting Bryan in the cabinet would disturb many of Wilson's intellectual and middle-of-the-road supporters and the eastern conservatives of all parties. Furthermore, Bryan was still suspected of presidential ambitions, which he might attempt to promote from a cabinet seat. To ignore Bryan, however, would seem political ingratitude, would alienate an important wing of the party in Congress, and leave a potentially powerful critic inside the party but outside the administration. The nation's editors debated the question, and hundreds of pro- and anti-Bryan letters descended on Wilson.[9]

Shortly after election Wilson and House talked over the Bryan problem, and House advised that there was really no alternative to offering him a cabinet post. He might be offered his choice of Secretary of State or a top-ranking embassy, with the hope he would choose the latter, but it seemed unlikely that Bryan would let himself be removed from the scene so easily. By the time Wilson returned from his Bermuda trip, the weight of Democratic opinion seemed to be in Bryan's favor, and Wilson faced political necessity. When Bryan visited Trenton on December 21, an understanding was reached that he would become Secretary of State. No announcement was made, and for several weeks the eastern

[9] Even President Taft remarked that while the outgoing administration would dispose of as much of the unfinished business as possible, only Mr. Wilson could dispose of Mr. Bryan. *New York Times* (Nov. 19, 1912).

newspapers continued to warn: "It is not possible to separate Mr. Bryan from Bryanism. The President cannot very easily touch one without being defiled by the other." But Mr. Dooley, as usual, had the situation properly analyzed: ". . . Beyond all his other charms with a brick in his hand he's as expert as a rifleman. An' I'd rather have him close to me bosom thin on me back."[10]

Other Cabinet Selections

After Bryan, no cabinet commitments were made for several weeks. As of January 9, only about half of those who eventually turned up in the cabinet were on the slate. Toward the end of January, Wilson had his mind made up about several of the posts and the alternatives rather clear with respect to the others. Colonel House went to Florida, where Bryan was vacationing, to let him know how things stood. House reported by letter on the 29th that Bryan "likes the names suggested for our family gathering." Wilson immediately invited William G. McAdoo to be Secretary of the Treasury.[11] Although McCombs had wanted the post, McAdoo was the only person seriously considered.

On House's return in mid-February, several other decisions were reached: Josephus Daniels, editor and member of the Democratic National Committee from North Carolina, head of the publicity bureau of the Wilson campaign, for Secretary of the Navy; Albert Sidney Burleson of Texas, chairman of the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives and a stalwart of the Wilson campaign, for Postmaster General; David F. Houston, a political unknown but well known as an economist and chancellor of Washington University of St. Louis—originally suggested by Page—for Secretary of Agriculture. Wilson had met Houston once or twice, but knew him mostly by reputation. All the negotiations with him were conducted through House. There was no publicity and Houston traveled to Washington to be sworn in on the strength of House's word.[12] The choice for Secretary of Labor was William B. Wilson, a leader of the mine workers union and a congressman from Pennsylvania, who had been an early Woodrow Wilson supporter.[13]

[10] *Ibid.* (Feb. 1, 2, 1913).

[11] This was on February 1. William G. McAdoo, *Crowded Years* (1931), p. 177.

[12] David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet* (1926), Vol. 1, pp. 9-16.

[13] This was a new post, depending on a bill then in Congress, which would divide the Department of Commerce and Labor. The bill was not signed until the last day of Taft's administration.

There were several difficult decisions and last-minute changes. Wilson seriously considered Louis D. Brandeis, first for Attorney-General and later for Secretary of Commerce. Both ideas had to be dropped because Brandeis' aggressive liberalism had made him a symbol of radicalism and won him no support whatever from the Democratic party leaders in his own state. The Attorney-Generalship went to James C. McReynolds of Tennessee, a Democrat who had made a reputation as an antitrust prosecutor before resigning from the Department of Justice during the Taft administration. His principal sponsor was House. Wilson met him only once, in February, when House brought him on a pretext to be looked over. The main fear about McReynolds at the time was that he might be too radical. The choice for Secretary of Commerce was William C. Redfield, a congressman from Brooklyn whose qualifications were that he had been a manufacturer, a free trader, and had visited the Philippine Islands whose future was then a hot issue of American policy.[14]

Last-Minute Decisions

With memories of the Ballinger scandal in the Taft administration still fresh, the post of Secretary of the Interior was the subject of much tugging on Wilson by those who wished more or less stringent conservation policies. Standing off western interests that desired a relaxation of federal controls, Wilson first offered the post to Mayor Newton D. Baker of Cleveland. When Baker declined, the job went to Franklin K. Lane, a California Democrat then serving on the Interstate Commerce Commission. Wilson knew Lane only by reputation and through occasional correspondence; he did not meet him until inauguration day. House had strongly recommended him, taking the precaution to clear him with Norman Hapgood, who was serving as liaison between Wilson and the conservationists.[15]

Finding a Secretary of War was apparently delayed until mid-February.[16] Wilson first decided to switch Lane to that post and give the In-

[14] A common historical quip is that Redfield's main distinction was being the last man in American public life to wear side whiskers.

[15] Seymour, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 107-08; Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, p. 18.

[16] This, at least, has been the view of historians. However, according to recently published memoirs of Felix Frankfurter, who was a War Department official at that time, Hugh C. Wallace came to the department for discussions with Secretary Henry L. Stimson on the ground that he was to be Secretary of War in the new administration. After several days of talks with Stimson and others in the department, Wallace concluded that he was not suited for the job and withdrew. Harlan B. Phillips, ed., *Felix*

terior Department post to his friend Walter Hines Page. Page was summoned for an interview to seal the bargain, but before he arrived someone pointed out that Congress would not like to confirm a southerner for a post supervising the Pension Bureau—the Grand Army of the Republic still had a strong voice. This project was dropped, and Wilson offered the job of Secretary of War to Representative A. Mitchell Palmer, of Pennsylvania. Palmer, who had wanted to be Attorney General, offered to take the Treasury post if McAdoo were switched to the War Department. On being told that this was impossible, Palmer declined the War Department on the ground of his Quaker beliefs.[17] With inauguration only a few days off, Tumulty suggested the name of Lindley M. Garrison, a New Jersey judge who was highly regarded locally. Wilson knew of him only vaguely, by reputation, but called him in, liked his looks, and offered him the War Department post on the spot.[18]

Arranging the cabinet took until the very end of February. Garrison, Daniels, McReynolds, and Burleson mailed letters of acceptance on February 25, the latter three apparently in response to notes from Wilson mailed about February 23. Redfield, whose post was formally offered on February 26, accepted on February 28. Inauguration was only five days away.[19]

Composition of the Cabinet

Wilson ended with a cabinet somewhere between the "political council" and the "executive council" types he had once distinguished, with perhaps an initial leaning to the political side. Bryan was the only figure with a nationwide political following of his own. However, Daniels, Burleson, Redfield, and W. B. Wilson had local sources of strength, were well known in the party, and had rendered notable service to the Wilson candidacy. McAdoo, relatively new in politics and not yet na-

Frankfurter Reminisces (1960), pp. 69-70. This episode would explain the lateness with which Wilson got around to approaching others about the job.

[17] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* p. 19.

[18] Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters,* Vol. III (1931), p. 455; Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 19-20. Garrison later told Felix Frankfurter that Wilson had explained the offer by saying that the most important responsibility of the post was to administer the Philippines, and that he wanted "a man with a very sensitive fiduciary equipment" to exercise this trusteeship. Phillips, ed., *op. cit.,* p. 71.

[19] These letters of acceptance are in the Wilson Papers, Library of Congress, Series II. Box 32. Except in the case of Garrison, the notes apparently formalized verbal agreements made some time earlier.

tionally known, had been one of the principal organizers of the victory. McReynolds and Lane both had some political standing, especially Lane, who was well known in the West, but they were chosen principally on the basis of their previous government experience and their potential as department executives. Houston was a pure "merit" appointment, reflecting Wilson's ties with the university world and his idea that the scientific work of agriculture ought to be lifted out of politics. Garrison was a man of repute in his profession, but a sheer accident as a cabinet choice.

The process of cabinet selection was closely guarded from the public and most of the party as well. Much to the disgust of the reporters who badgered him daily, Wilson refused to make any statements about the cabinet. By February the press had put enough odds and ends of information together to conclude that Bryan, McAdoo, and probably Burleson and Daniels would be in the cabinet, but there was wild speculation about the other posts up to inauguration day.

The only announcement Wilson made about his appointments before inauguration concerned his personal staff. On February 3 he announced that Joseph P. Tumulty would accompany him to Washington as Secretary to the President—a continuation of the role he had been performing as Secretary to the Governor.

CONFRONTING THE ISSUES

Gubernatorial duties and cabinet selection occupied Wilson from mid-December throughout February, but these were only two of the areas requiring attention. The correspondence was enormous, and after the first days, Wilson saw only a fraction of it; Tumulty and the clerks had to struggle with the rest.[20]

Policy Problems

Hundreds of people wanted to inform the President-elect of the "facts" in the policy areas in which they had special interests or expert

[20] In the Wilson Papers at the Library of Congress there is perhaps the equivalent of two or three filing cabinets of the miscellaneous mail accumulated at Trenton: letters and telegrams offering congratulations, advice, gifts; requests for jobs, money, or favors; friendly and crank letters of all kinds; and occasionally a letter of some im-

knowledge, and long letters, memoranda, and pamphlets accumulated at Trenton. Much of this material could be discounted because of the obvious interest or affiliation of the sender, but a great deal of it came from nonpartisan or academic sources, which could be taken seriously. Indeed, some of it came at Wilson's invitation or encouragement. International lawyers, alarmed over the canal tolls issue, sent long disquisitions on the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty and the Panama Canal Act. A Princeton professor reported the results of a questionnaire on currency reform he had sent to the nation's leading economists. President Charles R. Van Hise, of the University of Wisconsin, sent material on antitrust policy; President David Starr Jordon, of Stanford, sent reports on the Pacific fisheries. The leaders of the conservation movement, most of whom had backed their old friend Roosevelt, now sought to establish relations with Wilson and warn him about anti-conservationists in his own party. (Gifford Pinchot tried through three third parties to get an interview or put information in Wilson's hands.) Finally Wilson granted an interview to one of the conservationist leaders, Congressman William Kent, a Progressive from California, and later received material from him on bills pending in Congress.

Wilson occasionally took the initiative in informing himself. For example, he sent a Princeton political scientist, Henry Jones Ford, off to the Philippines on an ostensibly private trip, with the secret mission of reporting to Wilson on the independence problem. Ford was put on the War Department confidential payroll after inauguration.

Head of the Party

Of the matters called to Wilson's attention, a great many were almost purely political, relating to his function as party leader. In several states Democratic factions were competing for recognition in the distribution of federal patronage; Democratic regulars and Wilson irregulars needed to be reconciled. More problems arose in the states whose legislatures were electing United States senators in January and February of 1913. In some of these states, the party choices had been narrowed through preference primaries, but there were still some situations open, with hot competition between progressive and conservative Democrats. The Republi-

portance buried in the shuffle. Some of these communications received form-letter acknowledgments; many of them apparently were never acknowledged at all. This great mass is classified as Series V of the Wilson Papers.

can split and the emergence of the progressives as a more or less separate party confused the situation in a few states and created opportunities for trading between Democrats and Progressives. Democratic leaders, worrying about how or at what price to get Progressive support for Democratic senatorial candidates, or whether to support Progressives in situations where the Democrats manifestly had no chance, sought Wilson's advice or blessing on proposed deals. There was also discussion among some of the younger and more progressive Democratic senators and representatives (particularly those close to Bryan) of trying to enlist the new congressmen elected in 1910 and 1912 in an attempt to seize the Senate and House caucuses and overturn the seniority rule for distribution of committee posts.

These problems were all full of implications for the composition of the next Congress, the prospects of a Wilson legislative program, and the control of the Democratic party. Wilson's interests were involved, and his friends looked to him for leadership and guidance. Providing them would have been in keeping with his theories of party leadership. Nevertheless, he declined to make public statements on most such issues and apparently did not take an active hand through correspondence or other unpublicized activity.[21]

President-elect and Congress

Democratic congressmen also looked to Wilson for leadership, or at least for expressions of views, on matters coming up in the lame duck session. He was in touch with Underwood and Glass on two of the major issues for legislation in the next session, but meanwhile there was other business. Would he intervene to save the Commerce Court, which was about to be abolished in the wake of the Archbald scandal? Would he support a bill to establish a national legislative reference service? What about the militia pay bill urged by the Army? Did he not think it a good idea to defer consideration of the Jones bill for Philippine independence until the next Congress, but to push for a showdown on the Webb liquor bill so that the Democrats would not have to handle this hot issue? On these matters, too, Wilson avoided committing himself.[22] His reticence

[21] The Wilson Papers give an incomplete picture of his out-correspondence during that period, but it is clear that he was not making more than perfunctory responses to most of these stimuli.

[22] See letters on these and other subjects in the Wilson Papers, Series II, Boxes 29-32, especially an interesting letter from Congressman Pou to Tumulty, Feb. 20, 1913, com-

can be explained only by conjecture, but presumably he felt inadequately informed and so pressed for time that it was not safe to risk involvement. It is also possible that he was trying to avoid the experience of the last Democratic President, Grover Cleveland, who spoke out on a number of issues before his first inauguration and was rebuffed by Congress.[23]

The One-Term Amendment

There was one major exception to Wilson's rule of silence. He did take a clear stand and thus probably determined the fate of a proposed constitutional amendment limiting the President to one term. This idea had been discussed for years, especially by the Democrats in their more hopeless moments; it had been in both the Democratic and Republican platforms in 1912, partly because a good many people really believed in it, and partly because it was such a convenient stick with which to beat Roosevelt. Wilson had made no specific references to it during the campaign. After the election, Taft continued to support the proposal, in his Lotus Club speech and elsewhere, and so did Bryan, who ignored editorial comments that he seemed unduly interested in hastening Wilson off the scene.

In late November, while Wilson was in Bermuda, House made a scouting trip to Washington, and on his return to New York he alerted Wilson to the threat of the one-term amendment. When Congress convened, the bill was quickly passed by the Senate, but Wilson's friends were waiting for it in the House. At the strategic moment, Representative A. Mitchell Palmer showed his colleagues an exchange in which he had asked Wilson's opinion.[24] Wilson's response—bearing the same date as the inquiry—was in strong opposition.[25]

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plaining because he had been unable to get any word out of Wilson and wondering if Wilson realized how congressmen on the scene in Washington were trying to protect his interests, but getting no clear signals.

[23] "Few Presidents-elect have been as frank on policy questions or have as openly prepared to assume power. . . . In response to an inquiry by a group of Congressmen, Cleveland came out flatly for suspension of the purchase and coinage of silver. . . . Congress promptly answered Cleveland by defeating suspension, 158 to 118. It was an omen of future discord between Cleveland and Congress. It may have persuaded many of his successors of the risks of assuming responsibility for policy before the authority to carry out responsibility has been achieved." J. Russell Wiggins, "Party Changes Cause Awkward Gaps," *Washington Post* (Nov. 9, 1952).

[24] "The form of the amendment, and perhaps the fate of the proposition, can be controlled by an intimation from yourself as to your views, if you desire to give it." Palmer to Wilson, Feb. 5, 1913. Wilson Papers, Series II, Box 32.

[25] A good deal of arranging went into this. House, who was in Florida in late Janu-

In this letter Wilson first tried to soften the personal interest angle by pledging himself not to use presidential power to secure a renomination; he would be bound by the wishes of the party and the people. He expressed the hope that the problem would be solved during the next four years by a presidential primary law, which would place the choice of nominee directly into the hands of the people, where it belonged. He pointed out that the practical effect of a one-term chief executive, as observed in New Jersey, was that few reforms ever were carried through because the corrupt elements cynically banded together to wait out any threat to them. He thought the public interest best served by the possibility of re-electing a President. "As things stand now the people might more likely be cheated than served by further limitations of the President's eligibility. His fighting power in their behalf would be immensely weakened. No one will fear a President except those whom we can make fear the elections." He closed on a point of high principle: "We singularly belie our own principles by seeking to determine by fixed constitutional provision what the people shall determine for themselves and are perfectly competent to determine for themselves. We cast a doubt upon the whole theory of popular government."[26]

The Wilson letter was not publicly discussed, but it was shown to enough Democrats in the House to be decisive. Within a few days it was noted that enthusiasm for the amendment had cooled rapidly, and it was soon buried altogether.[27]

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ary and early February to discuss cabinet and diplomatic appointments with Bryan, had shown the Nebraskan a copy of Wilson's proposed letter in order to ensure against an explosion from that source over repudiation of a pet platform plank. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 22-23.

[26] *Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson: The New Democracy,* Vol. 1, pp. 21-26.

[27] See *New York Times* (Feb. 9 and 12, 1913). The *Times* reporter had not caught wind of the Wilson letter, but he reported another factor in Democratic calculations. Why should Democrats contribute to the political sterilization of Roosevelt, who had handed them the Presidency by splintering the Republican party and might continue to perform a similar function in the future?

CHAPTER 6

PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT

In the day of Taft and Wilson, the relations between incoming and outgoing administrations—at least in cases of party overturn—were usually limited and formal in character. Such events were not frequent enough to develop a detailed, rigid code of behavior, but it was generally expected that the President-elect would remain absent from Washington and occupied with choosing his cabinet and other preparatory business until shortly before inauguration day. During that time he would refrain from statements or acts that might be construed as interference in matters for which his predecessor was still constitutionally responsible. There would be communication between the two camps about the inaugural ceremonies and the occupancy of the White House, but virtually no discussion of the substantive business of the government. Depending on the personalities and circumstances, the incoming and outgoing cabinet members might have conversations about the state of their respective departments, but since the new cabinet was not announced (and often not even chosen) until shortly before inauguration, such discussions were necessarily brief. The whole affair was not greatly different from the punctilio surrounding the surrender of a city to a victorious army commander.

The turnover of 1913 began according to expectations. Wilson remained aloof in New Jersey, declined to comment on current issues, and made it clear that he would not announce his cabinet until inauguration. He did, according to one report, make a spur-of-the-moment effort to reach Taft by telephone on November 16, when he went to New York to board his ship to Bermuda and discovered that Taft also was in the

city. However, Taft was at that moment somewhere between his hotel and his next appointment and was unavailable; Wilson did not follow up this effort.[1] He took no further initiative to obtain information on governmental problems directly from the administration, relying instead on private persons, Democratic members of Congress, and occasional officials of the executive branch who could reach him on some sort of a personal basis.

THE TAFT-WILSON CORRESPONDENCE

Taft's private opinion of Wilson was not particularly high. He thought "the schoolmaster" an opportunist whose "dictatorial manner" would either split the Democratic party or push it to radical extremes that would prove the Republican adage that the Democrats represented the "organized incapacity" of the country.[2] Nevertheless, the campaign had been conducted without personal attacks between Taft and Wilson, and when the election was over, Taft resumed his external composure and prepared to set an example of courtesy. In fact, it is not altogether unreasonable to conclude from Taft's behavior that the idea of serious discussions with Wilson was lurking in the back of his mind.

An Invitation to the White House

Not long after election, Taft began dropping hints that he would like to see Wilson. The suggestion first appeared in a friendly newspaper.[3] A

[1] *New York World* (Nov. 17, 1912).

[2] Taft recorded his opinions in frequent family letters which are preserved in the Taft Papers in the Library of Congress. For example, to his brother Horace D. Taft, summarizing the situation on the eve of the election, November 1, 1912, and speculating about the future: "With the Senate and the House Democratic, and the schoolmaster a marplot in the White House, and a gentleman who knows it all, the toboggan that the Democratic sled will strike will give it a swiftness of movement in some direction that will set the people aghast, whether such movement will be successful or not." General Correspondence Series, Container 206.

[3] "President Taft, it is known, would be glad to have the President-to-be come to Washington between now and March 4 and spend a few days as his guest, surveying the White House." (Washington *Evening Star*, Nov. 13, 1912.) The *Star* reporter covering the White House, William W. Price, was a favorite of Taft's. A few weeks later, in what was apparently a "letter of introduction" on behalf of Price, Taft wrote to Wilson: "He is, so to speak, an adjunct of the Executive Offices, and you will find him of very great use in giving publicity to the facts which you wish to have given to the public without being personally responsible for them . . . , and for the contradiction

little later, while Wilson was still in Bermuda, Taft asked Representative Burleson to try to find out how Mr. and Mrs. Wilson would feel about an invitation to the White House. Taft said it would be an opportunity to convey information about the administration of the White House and other unspecified matters, which might be highly useful to the Wilsons, but he did not want to embarrass them by a direct invitation that might be unwelcome. Burleson passed the inquiry to Colonel House, who immediately wrote to Wilson about it.[4] Meanwhile Taft apparently had second thoughts about this roundabout procedure and wrote a personal note directly to the President-elect to extend the invitation. He also inquired whether Wilson would be interested in making an inspection trip to Panama similar to the one that Taft himself was then preparing to make.

Wilson's reply was warm enough, but he clearly was not interested. He said: "I feel that, in the circumstances, I ought to deny myself the trip to Panama, greatly as I should enjoy and benefit by it, and that it is doubtful whether I ought to give myself even the indulgence of a day off at Washington to enjoy your hospitality, so graciously offered. I shall have my nose to the grindstone."[5] Wilson was probably right in saying that he did not have time to go to Panama, but his schedule was hardly so tight that he could not have worked in a trip to Washington. Apparently he preferred to keep his distance from Taft.

Social and Domestic Arrangements

These first letters at least broke the ice for further correspondence. On January 2, Wilson asked Taft's "candid opinion" of the White House housekeeper.[6] But before Taft received this letter, he had written directly

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of the thousand and one misstatements, sometimes annoying, which are made in the papers of the country as if direct from the White House office." Taft to Wilson, Jan. 27, 1913. Carbon copy in Taft Papers, Presidential Letterpress Book 47, p. 461.

[4] House to Wilson, Nov. 28, 1912. Woodrow Wilson Papers, Library of Congress (cited hereafter as Wilson Papers), Series II, Box 28.

[5] Wilson to Taft, Dec. 2, 1912. Taft Papers, Presidential Series 3, Container 538, Folder 423. The author has been unable to locate either the original or any copy of Taft's first note to Wilson in the Wilson or Taft papers. It was probably handwritten, as much of the personal correspondence between high figures still was in those days. However, its contents can be inferred rather easily from Wilson's reply. The substance of this correspondence also leaked to the press within a few days. See *New York Times* (Dec. 9 and 17, 1912).

[6] Taft Papers, Presidential Series 3, Container 538, Folder 423.

to Mrs. Wilson to assure her of the adequacy of the housekeeping staff. The arrival of Wilson's inquiry encouraged Taft to send a second letter about presidential domestic and financial arrangements. He sent a floor plan of the White House (which neither of the Wilsons had ever been in), volunteered to start a long-deferred project to increase the number of guest rooms on the third floor, and later sent an Army Engineer officer to consult Wilson about the plans. He also offered to ask Burleson, who was chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, for a regular appropriation for the salary and other expenses of the White House military aide, which would make it possible to have an officer of suitable rank detailed to the post without the financial sacrifices incurred by previous aides. Taft went on to tell which items of White House expense were borne by the government and which by the President, assuring Wilson that the compensation was ample: "I have been able to save from my four years about $100,000." "I give you these personal details because I am afraid I shall not have an opportunity, in view of your engagements, to meet you under conditions that will enable me to have a long talk with you, and I feel as if I would have liked the same kind of information when I came in," he explained.[7]

Wilson immediately responded with thanks for "just the kind of information I could get from no other source," and endorsed Taft's various suggestions. Mrs. Wilson also wrote to Taft to thank him for the information about the housekeeper, which stimulated the President to a gallant reply and brought him a second appreciative note from Mrs. Wilson. There was further correspondence along this line as the Tafts invited the Wilsons to tea on the afternoon before the inauguration, and the Wilsons invited the Tafts to have lunch at the White House after the ceremony.[8]

This was the extent of the Taft-Wilson correspondence. Whatever Taft's motivations were, they were not strong enough to cause him to attempt to break through Wilson's desire to confine their relationship to social and domestic affairs at the White House.[9]

[7] Taft to Wilson, Jan. 6, 1913. Carbon copy, Taft Papers, Presidential Letterpress Book 47, pp. 407-10.

[8] Taft Papers, Presidential Series 3, Container 538, Folder 423.

[9] It might be noted that Joseph P. Tumulty visited Washington before inauguration. He looked over the White House offices, called on Taft, and was taken to lunch at the Metropolitan Club by Taft's secretary, Charles Hilles, but there is no evidence that he carried any significant communication between the two principals.

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Wilson's lack of interest in consultations with Taft or high-ranking members of the administration did not prevent lower officials from showing interest in him. In the weeks before inauguration, there were numerous attempts, both in correspondence and in person, to establish communication, put information on departmental business into his hands, and advise him on a course to follow. Some of these efforts were trivial—minor bureaucrats finding flimsy excuses to write to the President-elect and usually getting not even an acknowledgment. Other bids had their amusing side: several ambassadors and ministers, all holding more or less political appointments from Taft, wrote to Wilson to assure him of their willingness to step aside, but at the same time to hint that they might be persuaded to remain in their posts. Presumably motivated by desires both to be helpful and to protect their own positions and policies, miscellaneous officials seized opportunities to provide information to Wilson. In response to a routine request from his office for copies of certain bills and reports, the Isthmian Canal Commission sent voluminous data on the situation in Panama; a little later, through the aid of a friendly congressman, an interview with Wilson at Trenton was arranged for Colonel Goethals, the principal engineer of the Panama Canal. Dr. Frederick A. Cleveland, chairman of Taft's Commission on Economy and Efficiency, volunteered information, through Colonel House, about the model budget then being developed.[10]

While most such overtures had little success, it was possible, with the right connections, to get at least a friendly hearing from Wilson. For example, Colonel Hugh L. Scott, an Army career man, who came from a prominent Princeton family that had produced a number of distinguished Presbyterian clergymen, obtained an interview at Wilson's home and warned him about "the political element of the army." Scott strongly advised Wilson not to go along with the pressures building up to have General Leonard Wood removed as Chief of Staff before the expiration of his term appointment, and even ventured to argue against a certain individual whom Wilson seemed to be thinking of for Secretary

[10] Wilson Papers, especially Series II.

of War. How much influence this advice had is impossible to tell, but apparently Wilson did not resent it. At any rate, Wood was retained, the secretaryship did not go to the man the Army leaders feared, Scott himself was soon promoted to brigadier general, and later made Chief of Staff.[11]

On at least one occasion the State Department took steps to have Wilson informed on a matter that had been handled "out of channels" at the presidential level. For the past several months, President Taft had been in touch with Samuel R. Bertron, a New York businessman, who had business interests and personal acquaintances among high officials of the governments of the Balkans and Near East. Traveling in that area, Bertron had reported to Taft that the Balkan allies and the Turks were considering asking the President to mediate their current conflict. Taft apparently did not take this too seriously—the official State Department policy was to avoid involvement in an area considered the back yard of the European powers—but he at least kept the channel open.

The matter first came to the attention of officials at the working level of the State Department in December while Taft was in Panama. The Secretary of State was out of town, and a letter from Bertron fell into the hands of First Assistant Secretary F. M. Huntington Wilson, an experienced diplomat and officer around whom much of the daily activity of the department revolved. In January, Huntington Wilson arranged through McCombs to have Bertron tell his story to the President-elect.[12] There is no record of what Wilson thought of this, although there are indications that for some time after inauguration he, too, had a personal interest in the Balkans that was not fully shared by the State Department. At any rate, the Balkan conflict eventually was settled without American participation.[13]

[11] Hugh Lenox Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier* (1928), pp. 468-71; Hermann Hagedorn, *Leonard Wood,* Vol. 2 (1931), pp. 128-29.

[12] McCombs to President-elect Wilson, Jan. 25, 1913. Wilson Papers, Series II, Box 31. McCombs said that Bertron had a message concerning "certain diplomatic matters" that would "require continuous attention from now and for a considerable period of time after your inauguration." There is no direct evidence but it is a reasonable conjecture that Taft directed or at least knew that Bertron was being sent to Wilson.

[13] Fragments of the Bertron-Balkans story can be found in the Taft Papers, Presidential Series 2, Containers 2379 and 4175; Archives of the State Department (U. S. Archives), files 767.70/107, 767.70/206, 767.70/261, 767.70/372, and a bound folder of Wilson-Bryan correspondence.

THE MEXICAN CRISIS

There is a similar uncertainty about the relations between Wilson and the Taft administration in connection with an event of much greater importance—the Mexican crisis of February 1913.[14] On February 9, a revolution against the Madero government broke out in Mexico City. For several days there were street fighting and artillery bombardment in the capital. The United States consulate and many other buildings in the heart of the city were destroyed. A great many noncombatants were killed, including several United States citizens. Communications and public services broke down, troops and rioters on both sides were out of control, and in spite of the efforts of the United States Ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, neither side took effective steps to protect the lives and property of foreign neutrals. Several hundred North Americans and other members of the foreign colony huddled around the embassy, which seemed in danger of being engulfed in the fighting. American business interests in Mexico looked to the Taft administration for protection, and the relatives of the Americans in Mexico City, stirred by alarming press reports, clamored for immediate military action to head off a bloody massacre.

Taft's Policy

The Taft administration was in a dilemma. Revolutionary activity had been a nuisance to American businesses in Mexico for some time, and the danger to the foreign colony was undeniable. The Marines had been sent into Nicaragua on much less provocation, but armed intervention in a country of the size and importance of Mexico was a different matter. With Taft's term expiring in only three weeks, the timing could hardly have been worse. Intervention was certainly not a step to which a rejected, outgoing administration should commit the country. Congress was in session and might be consulted, but this would be a time-consuming and perhaps frustrating business. There was also the practical question whether American forces could reach Mexico City in time to save the

[14] Howard F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico* (1953), pp. 124-88, contains a detailed and authoritative account of the revolution of 1913 and the Taft and Wilson Mexican policies.

foreign colony, since news of an intervention might inflame the Mexicans and increase the danger.

After several extraordinary cabinet meetings, Taft decided to try to wait it out. Naval forces were ordered to stand off Mexico, and troops were sent to border points and ports of embarkation. The policy was to put forces in position to move if the situation got any worse but not to commit them for the moment. Taft was reported "anxious to avoid taking any steps that would embarrass his successor in the Presidential office," regarding it "unfair to commit the United States to a policy that President Wilson would be obliged to carry out for the sake of National honor or because he could not help himself."[15]

A break came on the tenth day of the siege. General Victoriano Huerta, the leader of Madero's troops, turned on his chief, deposed him, and declared himself President. United States Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, who had some advance intimation of this event and may have encouraged it, immediately brought Huerta and the leader of the rebels together at the Embassy and arranged a truce. The ambassador and the Taft administration made no secret of their relief at the fall of Madero, who had been considered hopelessly weak. "With only two weeks of an administration left," Taft wrote, "Mexico City did not promise a very pleasant problem, but fortunately with their treachery and throat-cutting, a light has broken in on the situation enabling us to see with fair clearness beyond the fourth of March."[16]

During the next few days, Huerta gradually established himself in control and the fighting subsided, although reports of violence against members of the Madero administration and general unrest in the city kept tension high. Then, on February 23, came the report that Madero and his Vice President had been killed while in custody of Huerta's troops, in circumstances that strongly suggested a cold-blooded execution. This aroused great indignation in the outside world and, to the American public, seemed to raise anew the question of intervention. Taft continued to mobilize American forces. However, the danger to the Americans in Mexico apparently was not increased by the coup, and Ambassador Wilson recommended immediate recognition of the Huerta government and began negotiating to that end. The Department of State

[15] *New York Times* (Feb. 18, 1913).

[16] W. H. Taft to Horace P. Taft, Feb. 20, 1913. Taft Papers, General Correspondence Series, Container 207.

did not wish to move so fast, and things remained unsettled for the last few days of the Taft administration. There is some question whether the failure to recognize Huerta was in deference to American public opinion about the Madero murder, because of Taft's scruples about committing the next administration, or merely because Huerta was slow in coming to terms on American claims that the State Department wished to have accepted as a condition of recognition.[17]

Wilson's Indifference

Here, then, was an authentic foreign policy crisis coming at one of the worst possible times in the election cycle. What were the relations between the Taft administration and President-elect Wilson during the Mexican crisis? In the first few days, while the fighting was heaviest, there were no visible signs that the administration was consulting Wilson or informing him of the course of events. When questioned by reporters, Wilson said that he was following the case through newspaper reports, but he seemed unconcerned in contrast to the storm being whipped up in the press.

Two weeks after the revolution started, during the brief lull between Huerta's coup and the death of Madero, there were reports in the newspapers that Wilson was beginning to show interest. In fact, the *New York Times* confidently asserted that arrangements were made for a secret consultation among Wilson, Secretary of War Stimson, and General Wood, the Chief of Staff.[18]

The following day both Wilson and Stimson denied the story. However, by then the news of the killing of Madero had arrived. Excitement was high, and Stimson made no secret of his interest in communicating with the new administration. The *Times* reported:

> . . . He took advantage of the occasion to express something that the Taft

[17] From a reading of contemporary newspaper accounts, one gathers the impression that the American public was readier for intervention than recognition. Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters,* Vol. III (1931), p. 240, stresses Taft's sense of the proprieties. Members of the Taft administration later were inclined to stress their willingness to recognize Huerta, although they mostly spoke from hindsight as Wilson unsuccessfully pursued a nonrecognition policy. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (1954), p. 108. *Cf.* Henry Lane Wilson, *Diplomatic Episodes in Mexico, Belgium and Chile* (1927), p. 297.

[18] *New York Times* (Feb. 24, 1913). According to this report, the three were to meet at the Burlington, N.J., home of Wilson's temporary military aide, Col. Thomas Birch.

> Administration has been anxious to say for the past two weeks. While his statement was guarded Mr. Stimson extended in effect an invitation to Governor Wilson to come forward with a request that the Government place at his disposal the information in its possession as to the situation in Mexico and an explanation of the arrangements made for meeting a military emergency. Inferentially Mr. Stimson invited Gov. Wilson to have the men who will hold the portfolios of State, War and the Navy in the Wilson Cabinet take counsel at once with Secretaries Knox, Stimson and Meyer, in order to prepare themselves for the perplexing problem.
>
> "I believe," said Mr. Stimson in a typewritten statement prepared for the press, "that all members of Mr. Taft's Administration should stand ready to give Gov. Wilson and members of his Cabinet all information possible as to the situation in their respective departments."

The *Times* noted: "This brief hint to Gov. Wilson is official. The principal officers of the Taft Administration believe that the President-elect would be wise to take advantage of it without delay."[19]

Wilson, of course, was in no position to respond to Stimson's suggestion that he send forth the future Secretary of War. At that moment he still did not have a Secretary of War. Sometime that same day he offered the post to Lindley M. Garrison, but he did not have Garrison's acceptance until a day or two later. Whether pressure from the Stimson statement added to the haste of the offer is unknown.

The actual extent of Wilson's information on the Mexican situation remains unknown. In addition to the denied report of the Stimson-Wilson meeting, there have been other unverified reports that Wilson was receiving reports on Mexico through the State Department.[20] In any case, Wilson clearly declined to take Mexico seriously before inauguration and even seems to have regarded some of the efforts to get him to do so as attempts to divert him from his real purposes. When reporters asked him about Mexico,

> . . . [He] dismissed with a tolerant smile the stories that the Mexican situation would force him to make known earlier than he had intended the names of his Secretaries of State, War, and Navy. . . . In a much more inti-

[19] *New York Times* (Feb. 25, 1913).

[20] David Lawrence, who was covering Wilson at the time for the Associated Press, later wrote that Huntington Wilson got in touch with the President-elect about Mexico but that the latter "was suspicious and did not act in accordance with the advice given him." David Lawrence, *The Story of Woodrow Wilson* (1924), p. 98. This seems entirely reasonable, falling as it does into the same pattern as the documented effort of the State Department to inform Wilson on the Balkans negotiation. However, the present writer has been unable to find further information in any of the relevant biographical material or personal papers in the Library of Congress.

> mate and confidential conversation than he has yet had with newspaper reporters he made it apparent that none of the matters that have come up lately could swerve him from his purpose or make him believe that anything but social and economic problems were the real problems of his Administration. . . .[21]

Peculiar as this attitude may seem in historical perspective, Wilson was apparently giving the reporters his true feeling in the matter. He had no faith in any of the sources of information available to him. Besides, to take Mexico seriously would raise the possibility of forcible intervention —a step so contrary to his preconceptions about foreign policy that he was unable even to contemplate it at that time. The historian can only conclude that it was fortunate that the Mexican situation deteriorated no more than it did. The affair might have taken a turn in the last week of February requiring a positive decision of great importance. Neither the President nor the President-elect was in position to act responsibly in such an emergency.

THE WILSON INAUGURATION

Aside from Mexico, Wilson was occupied in the last few days of February with his personal arrangements, cleaning up his governorship, making last-minute cabinet decisions, and preparing an inaugural address. The address was hammered into shape at a hideaway deep in the stacks of the Princeton University library where he fled for solitude. There is no record that he consulted or showed it to anyone else before delivery.

On February 27, Vice President-elect Thomas R. Marshall stopped in Trenton on his way to Washington. Marshall had resigned as Governor of Indiana several weeks earlier in order to take a vacation in Arizona. He took no part in the cabinet decisions or other preparations and apparently had no desire to do so.[22] The Wilson-Marshall meeting was cordial. The two received the reporters together, and Wilson announced his desire that the Vice President have an active part in the administration.[23]

[21] *New York Times* (Feb. 25, 1913).

[22] On January 27, Marshall had telegraphed Wilson: "I will come East as speedily as possible upon your call but I would be grateful to have you make it as late as possible for I greatly need as much rest as I can get. . . ." Wilson Papers, Library of Congress, Series II, Box 31.

[23] *New York Times* (Feb. 28, 1913). It is probably unnecessary to add that Marshall dropped out of sight promptly after inauguration day.

On February 28, Wilson went to New York for last-minute discussions with Colonel House. That evening they faced McCombs (who had been complaining bitterly to anyone who would listen about his exclusion from Wilson's confidence) with the final cabinet slate, confirming the rumor that McAdoo was getting the Treasury post McCombs himself had wanted. The offer of an ambassadorship was little salve to McCombs' feelings. The implications of a foreign assignment for the chairman of the Democratic National Committee were too obvious.[24]

On to Washington

On March 1, Wilson turned the governorship over to his successor and borrowed $5,000 from a Princeton bank to tide him over the uncertain days ahead. The next day he completed his packing and personal arrangements, and on Monday morning, March 3, the Wilsons walked to the Princeton station and boarded a special train, crowded with Princetonians bound for Washington.

It was a week of great excitement in Washington. The return of the Democrats after sixteen years of Republicanism was likened by some to the occupation of Rome by the barbarian hordes. Wilson's cancellation of the inaugural ball and his refusal to accept honorary membership in the exclusive Chevy Chase Country Club confirmed this impression for those who took their cues from the society pages. To the office holders, the arrival of thousands of jubilant, job-hungry Democrats was not reassuring, despite the President-elect's proclaimed devotion to civil service reform. A rumor that Wilson intended to set up an office in the President's Room at the Capitol and direct the legislative process himself stirred the graybeards of Congress. Rumors about the content of the inaugural address, the composition of the cabinet, Democratic intentions about the civil service—even the trivia of domestic affairs at the White House—filled the newspapers.[25]

President Taft's final weekend at the White House was a busy one. He shook thousands of hands at receptions, sat up late autographing pictures, and took time to fire two members of the customs service against

[24] Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956), pp. 9-10; William F. McCombs, *Making Woodrow Wilson President* (1921), pp. 216-18.

[25] "Much interest is manifested as to the character and origin of the next White House cow. It is officially announced that Pauline, who has ministered to the Taft family for some years, is to return to her native home in the pine woods of Wisconsin." *New York Times* (Feb. 23, 1913).

whom damaging reports had been filed. He was also cordial to William Jennings Bryan, his opponent in 1908, who dropped in unannounced to pay his respects and have a look around the Executive Offices.

When the special Wilson train arrived in Washington on the afternoon of March 3, the President-elect was met by a large crowd of Princeton alumni (the whole inauguration at times threatened to turn into a Princeton rally), Democratic congressmen, and national committeemen, and was escorted to the Shoreham Hotel.[26] At four o'clock the Wilsons went to the White House for tea with the Tafts, then hurried back to their hotel to await the Tafts, who returned the call at six. The President-elect also made a brief appearance at a Princeton smoker that evening.

The Inaugural Ceremonies

The next morning Wilson joined Taft at the White House for the traditional ride up Pennsylvania Avenue. Arriving at the Capitol, the two went to the President's Room off the Senate, where Taft received final communications from Congress, which had been meeting day and night to clean up unfinished business. Taft signed the bill making separate executive departments of Labor and Commerce, plus several appropriation bills. However, he vetoed the Sundry Civil Appropriations bill, issuing a statement denouncing as "class legislation of the most vicious sort" a rider prohibiting the Department of Justice from using any of the funds therein appropriated for prosecution of labor unions under the Sherman Act. Since the bill provided funds for a significant part of the executive branch, a veto in other circumstances might have created a crisis; however, the knowledge that Wilson intended to call a special session before the end of the fiscal year enabled Taft to take his stand for the record without jamming the administrative machinery.

While Taft looked over bills, the two houses of Congress waited with their clocks stopped so as not to run past their legal expiration time at

[26] A roundabout route had to be taken to the Shoreham because Pennsylvania Avenue was jammed by a suffragette demonstration. The march from New York to Washington of the suffragette army of "General" Rosalie Jones had lent extra color to the news during the preceding days. Its numbers augmented by other female vote-seekers who had gathered in the capital, the army now made a substantial showing. The next morning, during the last hours of the old Congress, friendly congressmen made a commotion over the behavior of the Washington police, who had apparently handled the demonstrators with more vigor than might have been required.

noon. After receiving reports of the President's action, the houses quickly ran through their final business, and the Sixty-second Congress adjourned. Representatives and other distinguished guests then filed into the Senate chamber to observe the swearing-in of the Vice President and the new senators. As was the custom, the new cabinet members appeared in a body. This ended the speculation still going on over several of the posts, although the galleries buzzed with curiosity over such men as Houston and Garrison, who were complete surprises and almost unknown in Washington.

The ceremonies in the Senate chamber completed, the dignitaries moved to the east portico overlooking the crowd gathered in Capitol Plaza. The President and the President-elect appeared, and Wilson took the oath of office from Chief Justice Edward D. White. Before beginning his address, Wilson noted that the police had kept the crowd back, leaving a large open area in front of the stand. In a gesture thought symbolic, he said "Let the people come forward," and it was done.

The address itself was a short, dignified, but powerfully eloquent reiteration of the themes developed in Wilson's campaign and in the post-election addresses. The day, he said, marked the completion of the change of government begun two years before, when the House of Representatives became Democratic. The nation had been ". . . stirred by a solemn passion, stirred by the knowledge of wrong, of ideals lost, of government too often debauched and made an instrument of evil." It was a time for restoration of values neglected for the sake of material progress. The government would be put at the service of humanity through action and reform in such fields as the tariff, banking and currency, labor, agriculture, conservation, and social welfare. "This," he concluded, "is not a day of triumph; it is a day of dedication. Here muster, not the forces of party, but the forces of humanity. . . . I summon all honest men, all patriotic, forward-looking men to my side." The address was completely oriented to domestic reform; foreign affairs, significantly, were hardly mentioned.

The presidential party returned to the White House where the Wilsons were hosts at a luncheon for Taft, Vice President and Mrs. Marshall, and the new cabinet members and their wives. Mrs. Taft was not present, having extended her apologies to Mrs. Wilson in advance and slipped out of town early in the day. Wilson met at least one of his cabinet members for the first time and had his first words with most of

the others since their selection. After lunch, Wilson and Taft reviewed the inaugural parade, then Taft took a train for Augusta, Georgia—a Republican golfing retreat in that day also.

In the early evening Colonel House, whose disdain for crowds and formalities was so strong that he had even declined Wilson's invitation to join the presidential party at the inaugural ceremony, slipped into the White House and found Wilson over in the west wing having his first look at the new office. House brought a report on a man he had been scouting to fill the vacancy on the Interstate Commerce Commission caused by moving Lane to Interior. The first presidential decision was made: he would send the nomination to the Senate the next morning, before political pressure for this important vacancy had time to develop. Then he and House went out to watch the fireworks on the Washington Monument grounds.

Inauguration day marks the turning point of a presidential transition. Anticipation and preparation give way to action. The new Chief Executive completes the organization and staffing of his administration, begins to exert his influence on public policy, and begins several months of learning and mutual adjustment with his political lieutenants, the civil service, the Congress, and other persons and institutions making up the presidential working milieu. While the President's problems usually come to him tightly interwoven rather than sorted into neat compartments, the following discussion of Wilson's early months in the Presidency is divided, for convenience, into three parts. The first deals broadly with the organization and staffing of the administration, including its relations with the civil service; the second describes Wilson's initial impact on foreign policy; and the third summarizes his activities as a party and legislative leader.

CHAPTER 7

ORGANIZING AN ADMINISTRATION

Joseph P. Tumulty did not go to the Capitol on inauguration day to see his chief sworn in. During the ceremony, Tumulty was already at the White House overseeing the occupation of the executive offices. With this brisk beginning, the installation of the Wilson regime at the White House was quickly and smoothly accomplished. As at Trenton, Tumulty continued to serve as Wilson's principal assistant, responsible for appointments, press relations, and an astonishing variety of political and administrative detail.[1] Tumulty's secretary and assistant, Warren Johnson, and Wilson's personal stenographer, Charles Swem, were on hand from Trenton to replace their counterparts in President Taft's administration.[2] The remainder of the clerical staff, headed by Rudolph Forster, who had served Presidents since McKinley and was to remain until Franklin Roosevelt's time, continued undisturbed. In the White House proper, the chief usher and the housekeeper retained their posts. Unexpectedly, Taft's military aide and the White House physician also were retained.[3]

[1] John M. Blum, *Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era* (1951), pp. 58-74, discusses Tumulty's manifold functions and provides a good picture of White House staff operations in the Wilson administration.

[2] A female stenographer also brought from Trenton was finally placed in one of the departments after it was discovered with some embarrassment that the White House offices were male sanctuaries.

[3] The latter was Lt. Cary Grayson, a Navy doctor who remained throughout the Wilson administrations as the President's personal physician and frequent companion. Taft gave Grayson a warm introduction to Wilson at the White House tea on inauguration eve.

NEW DEPARTMENT HEADS

Replacement of executive department heads began promptly the morning after inauguration day. Wilson found the resignations of Taft's cabinet members on his desk when he arrived. He dictated a note for delivery in identical form to each member, accepting his resignation "to take effect upon the qualification of your successor."[4] The nominations of the successors went to the Senate at noon and were confirmed immediately, without hearings or significant debate. The new department heads were sworn in at their departments in informal ceremonies held that afternoon and the following morning.

The turnover at the Department of State was perhaps the most elaborate of the departmental affairs. Secretary Bryan spent most of the morning of March 5 with outgoing Secretary Philander C. Knox. "Many matters connected with foreign relations were taken up in such a way as to transfer . . . all information necessary for continuity in affairs of National policy. In many cases Mr. Bryan found elaborate memoranda prepared for his convenience." Knox presented to his successor the three assistant secretaries, the counselor, and the several heads of bureaus. The remainder of the department staff was assembled; Knox thanked them for their loyal support. Bryan also spoke briefly to the staff; it was understood from his remarks that many personnel replacements would be coming soon.[5]

Secretary David Houston's introduction to the Department of Agriculture was more casual. Not having heard from his predecessor, James Wilson, by the afternoon of March 5, Houston sent word that he would like to be sworn in at ten the following morning; Wilson replied that necessary arrangements would be made. Appearing at the office the next morning, Houston found the Secretary and bureau chiefs waiting with a small delegation of Houston's friends from Missouri. The oath was administered by one of the employees who was a notary public. Houston, who was a person of considerable dignity, was struck by the informality of it all. "I appeared at the office without anybody to vouch for me. I had no credentials in my hands. My commission had been signed, but I

[4] Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, Vol. IV (1931), pp. 14-15. Cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson*.

[5] For the events at the Department of State that day see *New York Times* (Mar. 6, 1913).

did not have it in my possession. In fact, up to that moment I had no direct word from the President, oral or written, that I was to be the Secretary of Agriculture."[6] After the ceremony the two Secretaries were left alone briefly, and Wilson told Houston about some of the employees in the Secretary's office he would find efficient and loyal if he were disposed to retain them. Houston offered Wilson the use of a department horse and carriage for his last few days in the city, which was declined. With the encouraging comment that a secretary could save half of his salary if he were careful, Wilson departed and Houston was on his own.

Josephus Daniels, appearing at the Navy Department, spent several cordial hours with his predecessor, George von Lengerke Meyer. Meyer introduced the principal officers in the department and talked at some length about the duties of the office, passing on a piece of doctrine cherished by Daniels and most of his successors. It was a warning not to let the admirals reorganize the Navy bureaus into a strict hierarchy heading up in a single uniformed chief. This would remove the Secretary so far from actual operations that he would have no real control.[7]

OTHER ORGANIZING ACTIVITY

The cabinet met briefly on the morning after inauguration and got down to serious business the second day in an atmosphere of restrained exuberance, confidence, and good will. Wilson took charge "as naturally as if he had been doing the same thing all his life."[8] He encouraged the members to speak frankly on all matters and said he would give them great responsibility and discretion on matters in their respective provinces. He seemed, Lane said, "the most sympathetic, cordial, and considerate presiding officer that can be imagined." Yet he was decisive and firmly in command at all times.[9]

During the first spring and summer of the administration, Wilson used the cabinet meetings for candid discussion and development of policy on many important issues. In the autumn he began to realize that the substance of many cabinet discussions was leaking to the press,

[6] David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet*, Vol. 1 (1926), pp. 38-39, tells of his taking over the Agriculture Department.

[7] Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of Peace* (1944), p. 119.

[8] Houston, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 35.

[9] Franklin K. Lane to Walter Hines Page, March 12, 1913. Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 21.

probably through Secretary of Interior Lane. The cabinet then declined rapidly as a policy-making body, and by the end of 1913 the individual members were complaining to Colonel House that they could not find out what was going on within the administration. The cabinet met less frequently and spent most of its time on relatively inconsequential topics. Decisions were reached through correspondence or private talks between the President and the department head concerned. The resulting compartmented pattern of administration prevailed throughout the two Wilson administrations.

On the day after inauguration, while public attention was focused on the cabinet and the White House, other meetings relating to the organization of the new administration were held in Washington. The Democratic National Committee met and voted to move party headquarters from New York to Washington, for the sake of better liaison with the administration. Despite the unsatisfactory relations between William F. McCombs and the President, which were known to most of the Democratic leaders, nothing was done about the chairmanship. It was hoped that McCombs could be prevailed upon to accept an ambassadorship.[10] After the meeting, the entire committee made a ceremonial visit to Wilson at the White House; this was the extent of the President's visible involvement.

Sensing the importance of good publicity, Wilson at first made determined efforts to improve his relations with the press. Promptly after arriving at his office on March 5, he had a statement ready for the reporters.[11] In the first days of the administration there was a deliberate open-door policy at the White House and the departmental offices. On March 15, Wilson established an important precedent by holding the

[10] McCombs displayed a statement he had extracted from Wilson in order to save his own face: "Those who know my admiration and affection for Mr. McCombs will naturally wonder why his name is not on the Cabinet list. Mr. McCombs told me that he did not desire a Cabinet appointment. I have offered him one of the principal diplomatic posts, and am still hoping that he will accept it." Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 20 *n*.

[11] "The President regrets that . . . he deems it his duty to decline to see applicants for office in person, except when he himself invites the interview. It is his purpose and desire to devote his attention very earnestly and very constantly to the business of the government and the large questions of policy affecting the whole nation, and he knows from his experience . . . that the greater part both of his time and of his energy will be spent in personal interviews unless he sets an invariable rule in the matter. It is his intention to deal with appointments through the heads of the several executive departments." Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 14. This policy was much approved but considered a "radical departure."

first of a series of semiweekly press conferences, open to all reporters. The purpose, he said, was to seek the partnership of the press in making effective the government's relations with the people. Despite his good intentions, Wilson was obviously appalled by the hundred or more reporters who appeared and many of the questions they asked, and it was a fairly stiff performance. As the months passed, Wilson got along well enough with what he considered the responsible members of the press, but his disdain and irritation at some of the less dignified aspects of journalism could not be concealed. The press conferences became irregular and were finally abandoned with the coming of the World War. It sometimes took heroic efforts by Tumulty to save Wilson from a thoroughly bad press.[12]

POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

Many decisions a new President has to make concern personnel appointments. The decisions about a cabinet are only the beginning. After inauguration, if not before, he must restaff such positions as the assistant secretaries and others of comparable subcabinet rank, the chiefs of the diplomatic missions, the heads of some of the leading bureaus. The way the President handles this problem has important implications for his party and factional position, his relations with Congress, his relations with the civil service, and for the general effectiveness of his entire administration.

Wilson approached this problem with a number of not wholly consistent attitudes. His personal inclinations were reformist in character. He had been a vice president of the National Civil Service Reform League, sharing that organization's commitment to the merit principle. He now wanted to bring new, "higher types," into the government service—a goal that might not always square with civil service formalities. Furthermore, in his capacity as a party leader, Wilson was interested in strengthening the progressive Democrats and rebuilding the party in his

[12] The principal student of presidential press relations concludes that while Wilson understood the importance of informing the public, he could not reconcile himself to the insistence of the press on deciding for itself what was news, when it should be reported, and what aspects should be emphasized. James E. Pollard, *The Presidents and the Press* (1947), p. 640. *Cf.* Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956), pp. 79-85.

own image. He had learned from Tumulty and others in New Jersey how important patronage could be in such a program. He also had learned in New Jersey the relationship of patronage to legislative success. These attitudes and goals with respect to personnel occasionally came into conflict; the mixed record of the Wilson administration shows how the President was pulled between them.

Subcabinet Appointments

One of the first tasks for Wilson and his new department heads was to complete the turnover in about twenty subcabinet positions of assistant secretary and comparable rank. The resignations of the incumbents were on Wilson's desk on the morning after inauguration, but he sent them back to the departments for consideration by the new secretaries. In a majority of the cases, replacements were decided on within the next few weeks after consultation between the President and the department head concerned, with an occasional assist from Colonel House. However, some of the assistant secretaries who were considered career men were retained indefinitely, and a few men who were clearly political appointees of Taft continued to serve for several months of the new administration.[13]

[13] In the Department of State, Wilson and Bryan divided the key appointments, the President choosing the counselor and the third assistant secretary while the Secretary chose the first assistant secretary, the solicitor, and the chief clerk. The second assistant secretary, a long-time career man, was retained. The outgoing first assistant secretary resigned in March and the position was vacant until his successor appeared a month later; the other incumbents remained until their successors arrived in April.

In the Treasury Department the turnover was slower. One of the three assistant secretaries had resigned just before inauguration, and the vacancy was filled in March by John Skelton Williams, a prominent businessman from Virginia. The other two assistant secretaries remained and were not replaced until July and September. One of the replacements was Bryon R. Newton, a publicity man previously in McAdoo's employment, who had worked on the Wilson prenomination campaign.

At Interior, one of the two assistant secretaries left within a week but was not replaced until June. However, the other incumbent, an obviously political appointee with an Ohio Republican background, remained for a year and a half.

The Assistant Secretary of Agriculture was replaced, before the end of March, by one of the career bureau chiefs, reflecting the opinion of both Houston and Wilson that most of the agriculture work was scientific and nonpolitical.

At the Departments of War, Navy, and Commerce, which had one assistant secretary each, the replacements were made quickly. The new Assistant Secretary of Commerce, installed on March 18, was a lawyer and former congressman from Michigan. At the Departments of War and Navy, where the new assistant secretaries were brought in immediately (Navy in March, War in April), the choices reflected Wilson's interest in promising young men. Henry S. Breckenridge, a Harvard Law graduate only

Most of the new appointees at this level were highly "political," with records of service to the party or, more specifically, to the Wilson candidacy. They varied greatly in origin and sponsorship. Some were Wilson's choices, men with whom he had become acquainted during his rise to the Presidency; others reflected the interests and connections of the department heads and the particular orientation of the departments concerned. Although aggressive Democrats bombarded Wilson with recommendations and petitions, it was generally understood that these jobs should be controlled by the President and the department heads, and the selections were made without creating significant difficulties within the party.

Bureau Chiefs

Among the bureau chiefs there was far less turnover, most of them being nonpolitical and technical in nature. However, in a few posts, which by tradition had become patronage of the party in power, new appointments were made, some of them causing considerable difficulty within the party. For example, Wilson sought to reward his Negro supporters by appointing a member of that race as Register of the Treasury, but because of virulent opposition from a few southern senators, the nomination was withdrawn. Still attempting to make some kind of a point, Wilson then nominated a Choctaw Indian, who was confirmed.[14]

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twenty-six years old, who had been an active Wilsonian in Kentucky, was appointed Assistant Secretary of War. The choice at Navy was Franklin D. Roosevelt, another young Harvard product, who had caught Wilson's eye by his pro-Wilson, anti-Tammany labors in New York.

At the Department of Labor, where the separation from the Department of Commerce kept matters in confusion for some time, the assistant secretary was not appointed until June. He was Louis F. Post, a veteran progressive crusader and editor of single-tax journals.

The turnover at the Post Office reflected compromise between the technical work of the department and its highly political orientation. Before the end of March, three of the four assistant secretaries had been replaced; one of the replacements was a former congressman, Alexander Dockery, another a House of Representatives committee clerk, Daniel C. Roper. A career man was retained as second assistant secretary.

At the Department of Justice the turnover was slower. The Assistant to the Attorney General was not replaced until August 1913. The Solicitor General resigned in March, but the position was not filled until August, when John W. Davis of West Virginia was appointed.

The best source of information on the succession of subcabinet officers is Arthur W. Macmahon and John D. Millett, *Federal Administrators* (1939), especially Appendix "A".

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

From highly partisan Democrats in Congress and elsewhere, there was considerable pressure on some bureau chiefs whose jobs were primarily technical or professional. Reflecting his basic allegiance to the merit principle, Wilson was able to protect the incumbents in most cases. For example, he stood firm behind Julia Lathrop, head of the Children's Bureau, Charles P. Neill, Commissioner of Labor Statistics,[15] and George R. Putnam, Chief of the Lighthouse Bureau. However, he gave way in the case of the Census Bureau, forcing out a distinguished statistician in favor of the chairman of the Democratic committee of Georgia.[16]

When Wilson himself believed that the chief of a technical bureau had transgressed into the political sphere, he moved quickly. The outstanding example was Dr. Willis Moore, head of the Weather Bureau, who was suspected by Houston and Wilson of having engaged in self-promotion for Secretary of Agriculture. They discharged Moore and launched an investigation, which resulted in the disciplining of thirty-nine members of the bureau. With Moore out, Wilson immediately felt pressures on behalf of unqualified candidates, which he was able to head off by appointing an outside advisory board of distinguished scientists who identified a suitable career man for elevation from within the bureau.[17]

Local Patronage

The relatively few top appointments available at Washington constituted the top crust of a large, juicy, patronage pudding the disposition of which was, from the first, a major concern of Wilson and the new administration. Of the 470,000 civil employees of the federal government, 187,000 (a shade under 40 per cent) were subject to appointment without examination.[18] Something over 50,000 of the exempt positions were postmasters, district attorneys, collectors of customs, and other officers subject to direct presidential appointment. As noted above, 2,000 such positions were vacant at the opening of the administration, due to normal turnover and the refusal of the Senate to confirm Taft's nominations. Many others would become or could be made vacant in the early months of the administration.

[15] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 173-74.
[16] Macmahon and Millett, *op. cit.,* pp. 392-94, 398-99.
[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 385-87.
[18] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report, for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1913,* p. 8.

It is common knowledge that the President's discretion in appointments, particularly for positions "in the field" away from Washington, is severely limited by the realities of the American constitutional and party system. The requirement of Senate confirmation, supplemented by the tradition of "senatorial courtesy,"[19] gives Congress sanctions against a President who disregards the wishes of its members. Congressmen of the President's party are thus able to enforce their desire to be consulted on appointments within their home states and often can almost dictate the choices. Within the boundaries of this general system, the President normally searches for elbowroom in which to introduce men of his own choice, to strengthen the presidential faction in the party, and to trade for legislative support. Specific appointments are determined by a complex process of clearance and bargaining between congressmen, the state and national party organizations, the federal departments, and the White House.

President Wilson's friends were quite alert to the possibilities inherent in the patronage. They had before them the example of the preceding Republican administrations, which had brought the techniques for allocation of patronage and clearance of prospective appointees to an unprecedented state of refinement.[20] Probably more than Wilson realized, adroit management of the state patronage by Tumulty had strengthened his position in New Jersey. And Walter Hines Page, early after election, had advised Wilson that it would be wise to delay making appointments, thus keeping congressmen anxious to please him, until he had achieved some of his legislative objectives.[21] Wilson himself regarded the business of patronage with considerable distaste. His civil service reformer's proclivities inclined him to leave incumbents alone in most circumstances. Where new appointments might be necessary, he felt an obligation to seek the best men—by which he meant men of intelligence, character, and progressive leanings—for the federal service. Despite his concern for party and legislative leadership, he had in years past regarded deliberate use of patronage to influence Congress as a form of executive encroachment on the legislature.[22] While he now

[19] It is customary for senators to support any colleague of their own party who opposes confirmation of a nominee from his home state, or to a position in his home state, on the ground that the nomination is "obnoxious" to him.

[20] Dorothy Ganfield Fowler, "Congressional Dictation of Local Appointments," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 7 (February 1945), pp. 25-27.

[21] See above, Chap. 3, p. 38.

[22] "There are illegitimate means by which the President may influence the action of Congress. He may bargain with members, not only with regard to appointments, but

was concerned about appointing progressives and willing to consult appropriate congressmen to this end, he found abhorrent the notion of consulting reactionaries or spoilsmen, even if they were members of his own party.

This attitude soon brought Wilson into conflict with Postmaster General Burleson, who had the largest group of presidential appointees under his jurisdiction. Burleson had assumed, along with most observers, that his experience in Congress and expertness in party organization had been his principal qualification for office, and that he would work closely with his former colleagues in Congress and other party professionals in dispensing the postmasterships. However, when he took to Wilson the first list of postmasters to be appointed, Wilson balked and demanded to see the file on each case. Two messengers were required to carry the bulky files to the White House. Several days later, Burleson returned and found Wilson unsatisfied with the qualifications of a number of the appointees and displeased by the idea of accepting recommendations from some of the reactionaries identified as congressional sponsors.

Burleson, alarmed at Wilson's attitude, made a strong plea for permission to follow the traditional patterns of appointment. He agreed with Wilson's concern that good men be appointed but insisted that good men could be found through congressional recommendations; if a congressman's first recommendation was unsatisfactory, he might be asked to suggest others until a suitable person was found. But to reject the suggestions of congressmen altogether would make enemies and create resentment that might mean the complete failure of the administration. By cooperating with congressmen, the administration would be able to appeal for votes on the ground of party loyalty, and thus even conservatives might be brought into accord with the administration. After considerable discussion, Wilson agreed to the appointments at hand.[23]

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also with regard to legislative measures. He may use his local patronage to assist members to get or retain their seats. He may interpose his powerful influence, in one covert way or another, in contests for places in the Senate. . . . Such things are not only deeply immoral, they are destructive of the fundamental understandings of constitutional government and, therefore, of constitutional government itself." *Constitutional Government* (1907), p. 71.

[23] The incident is described in Baker, *Wilson, IV,* pp. 43-47, 415-17.

Implications of Patronage Policy

The decision to go along with Burleson was, as Professor Link points out, "one of the early decisive turning points in Wilson's presidential career."[24] During his first weeks at the White House, Wilson spent a great deal of time personally reviewing prospective appointments, but he was soon overwhelmed by the physical burden of the job and the pressures of the situation. As the months wore on, he put increasing reliance on the recommendations coming to him from Burleson and the other department heads, from professionals like Thomas J. Pence at the Democratic national committee, and from Tumulty.[25] Wilson remained an irregular at heart, and occasionally intervened to make a personal appointment.[26] However, all but a handful of the appointments eventually were controlled by the professionals.

As Link observes, such men as Burleson and Tumulty "preferred to control the Democratic party rather than to reform it."[27] The few attempts that were made to intervene in state situations and reconstruct the party along Wilsonian lines turned out badly, for the most part. Most of the time, the administration worked with the forces that happened to be in control at the moment; Wilson followers in some states had the bitter experience of being spurned while the administration strengthened its own enemies. Whether a different approach by Wilson could have succeeded is uncertain. Link concludes: "By accepting the realities of political life and by working through the existing party hierarchy . . . he

[24] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* p. 159.

[25] Among other duties of the Secretary to the President, as developed by Tumulty, was the keeping of elaborate accounts of the distribution of patronage. Blum, *op. cit.,* pp. 73-74.

[26] Baker, *Wilson, IV,* p. 48, quotes a Wilson letter to Senator Thompson of Kansas, June 25, 1913: "I have the most sincere and earnest desire to meet your wishes in every possible way, but I think you will also appreciate the fact that there are instances in which it seems to me only just that I should appoint men of whose record I am personally cognizant and whom I personally desire to draw into the public service. The choice which the President exercises in all these matters is a very responsible one, and I feel that I am exercising it not only as President but as leader of our party; that it is incumbent upon me, therefore, to exercise *a personal judgment* in the matter wherever I have the material to do so." One Senator said to Wilson in exasperation: "I don't know where in hell you dig up some of those people unless you go to a Swedish employment agency." James W. Kerney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (1926), p. 309.

[27] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* p. 160.

yielded the lesser goal of party reform and won the larger goal of mastery over the Democratic forces in Congress and in the nation."[28]

WILSON AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

The 187,000 federal positions to which appointments could be made without competitive examination satisfied most, but not all, of the patronage demands of the Democratic party. Despite a strong endorsement of the merit system in the 1912 Democratic platform, there was heavy pressure on the competitive career positions, particularly in the South, where government jobs were highly prized and there was little devotion to the abstract principles of civil service reform.

Wilson's strategy in the early months of the administration seems to have been one of holding the line for the merit system in general, but making adjustments where he could satisfy the party without compromising a principle, and giving way to congressional demands when it seemed absolutely necessary. On the basis of the simple statistics, Wilson had a reasonably good civil service record in his first year.[29] However, his reformer friends were disappointed at his conduct and highly critical of some members of the administration, especially Burleson.[30]

Fourth Class Postmasters

The first controversial issue concerned the status of 36,000 fourth class postmasters who had been covered into the merit system under an executive order by Taft just before election, in October 1912. Democrats of course interpreted this as an attempt to ensure the loyalty of these Republican appointees and shelter them from the effects of a possible Democratic victory. After election, Wilson was urged by Democratic partisans to revoke the Taft order. On the other hand, the civil service advocates took their usual position that any removal of merit system pro-

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[29] For example, between July 1, 1913 and June 30, 1914—a critical period for the Wilson administration—there was a net increase of 12,842 employees, of which 9,863 were competitive and 2,979 exempt. This was a considerably higher proportion of competitive employees than for the system as a whole. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1914*, p. 6.

[30] For a critical view from one of the leading lights of the Civil Service Reform League, see William Dudley Foulke, *Fighting the Spoilsmen* (1919).

tection, regardless of how the individuals originally acquired it, was a step backward. Wilson compromised. On May 7, 1913, he threw open to competitive examination fourth class postmaster positions paying $180 a year or more, except where the incumbents had originally qualified on merit. During the following months, Burleson was thus enabled to hold new examinations for 21,000 of these offices and to take his choice of the top three names on the eligible lists. In making his choices he consulted the appropriate Democratic congressmen.

In 1914 a delegation of reformers called on Wilson, who "expressed surprise" that Burleson was asking for congressional advice, but he took no decisive action. The critics then asked to see the examination results and eligible lists at the Civil Service Commission, as they had often done in the past, but the commission, with two new Wilson appointees on it, denied them access.

Through most of the first Wilson administration, there was charge and countercharge as Burleson piously protested his belief in the merit system and his desire to use examinations only to promote the efficiency of the service, while the reformers insisted they could see political manipulation. These controversies are now obscured by time and the technicalities of the regulations, but a number of things done by Burleson seem hardly defensible as improvements in the merit system. For example, when a large number of rural free delivery routes were changed from horse and buggy to automobile transportation, the motorized carriers were declared a new class and the incumbents were dismissed. They could compete in examinations for their old jobs but received a maximum of only 3 per cent credit for experience. And the new examinations did not even test the ability to drive a car![31]

Other Exemptions

In the early part of the Wilson administration, Congress took full advantage of any opportunities to exempt from the civil service regulations any positions created by new legislation. For example, the Tariff Act of 1913 provided for 500 positions to administer the new income tax, all exempt for two years (by which time, presumably, the positions would be filled with Democrats). The employees of the Federal Reserve Board established by the Banking and Currency Act of 1913 also were

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 238-40

exempt. Even more disappointing to the reformers was Wilson's acquiescence in a rider on a deficiency act of October 1913, which removed civil service protection from 1,300 deputy collectors of internal revenue and deputy United States marshals. In approving the bill, he said:

> I am convinced, after a careful examination of the facts, that the offices of deputy collector and deputy marshal were never intended to be included under the ordinary provisions of the civil-service law. The control of the whole method and spirit of the administration of the proviso in this bill which concerns the appointment of these officers is no less entirely in my hands now than it was before the bill became law; my warm advocacy and support both of the principle and of the bona fide practice of civil service reform is known to the whole country, and there is no danger that the spoils principle will creep in with my approval or connivance.[32]

The deputy collectors remained outside the classified service until 1941. This large-scale exemption by statute became an important precedent for inroads on the merit system in later administrations.[33]

A Turning Point

During his first year, Wilson clearly gave way to such raids on the merit system for the sake of improving the prospects of legislation he considered vital. However, in January 1914, when he had been in office for ten months and several major bills had been passed, he began to make efforts to check the spoilsmen. A House committee reported an appropriation bill with a rider stripping civil service status from 2,400 assistant postmasters; Wilson let it be known through Burleson that he would veto the bill, and the rider was stricken. From then on there were only limited breaks in the civil service line. Wilson remained personally inclined toward reform and occasionally took a positive step on behalf of the merit system, particularly in his second term, but he made no all-out effort to enforce an administration-wide policy. Acrimonious controversy between Burleson, the Civil Service Commission, the Civil Service Reform League, and the civil service unions continued until the Republicans returned to power.[34]

[32] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1914*, p. 138.
[33] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *History of the Federal Civil Service* (1941), p. 87.
[34] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, p. 175; Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (1958), pp. 278-83.

ADMINISTRATIVE VALUES SECONDARY

Wilson's attitude on the civil service was characteristic of his attitude on most administrative matters during his first few months. He was concerned about administration, being a reasonably good administrator himself and one of the founders of the academic study of public administration in the United States, but he would not fight for administrative goals at the risk of seriously jeopardizing party or legislative support.

Wilson's indifference to the Commission on Economy and Efficiency illustrates that fact. Taft's veto of the Sundry Civil Appropriation bill on inauguration morning made it necessary for the bill to be reconsidered in the special session of 1913. This provided an opportunity for restoring the appropriation for the commission, which had been stricken from the earlier bill because of congressional jealousy. Despite the urging of many of his old friends, Wilson took no interest in the commission and did not press Congress to restore its funds. Although the commission continued its existence as a presidential agency until June 1913, Wilson had little, if any, contact with it, apparently dealing through Tumulty. On May 22, 1913, the fate of the commission was sealed when Tumulty handed Dr. Cleveland, the chairman, a formal letter of instruction about disposition of the files. The same day, Wilson wrote a lame note to a supporter in New York, John Purroy Mitchell:

> I am sorry to find out, upon looking into the matter, that the financial authorities of the Houses are not willing to include the appropriation for the Economy and Efficiency Commission in the pending Sundry bill. It looks as if it would have to go by the board for the present. This does not mean that I shall not take the matter up in which we are so much interested at a later date. It only means that I did not take hold soon enough amidst the many things that have been engrossing me.[35]

Related work was taken up in the Division of Efficiency, established that same year in the Civil Service Commission. However, administrative reform remained in a low priority through one emergency after another in the two Wilson administrations.

[35] Wilson to John Purroy Mitchell, May 22, 1913. Wilson Papers, Series VI, Box 197. See also Wilson Papers, Accession 9712, Container 14.

CHAPTER 8

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

In the field of foreign affairs, the Democratic triumph of 1913 ended a long period of stability in both policy and personnel. The Spanish American War had launched the United States in a new role in the world, characterized by empire in Puerto Rico, Panama, and the Philippines, by the Open Door and aggressive commercial policy in China, and by military intervention and dollar diplomacy in Central America and the Caribbean. While some men in both political parties had reservations about such policies, the Republican Presidents and Secretaries of State who followed one another for sixteen years had taken a sufficiently similar view of America's destiny that among those closely connected with foreign affairs, the general course of policy and the manner of its conduct seemed settled.

Stability in personnel had followed stability in political control and basic policy. Increased obligations in the world had led naturally to a measure of professionalization in the conduct of foreign relations. The consular service, in 1906, and the diplomatic service, in 1909, had been put on a merit basis by executive order, with appointments to the lower grades based on examinations and promotions based on merit. Although political considerations were important in the appointment of ambassadors, ministers, and a few of the consuls, many such offices, particularly in the less important capitals not attractive to politicians, were filled from the ranks of the diplomatic service. Such men often combined wide experience and genuine ability, forming a cadre of semiprofessional, old-

school diplomats with polished manners, keen noses for intrigue, and sharp eyes for investment opportunities.

At this time the Department of State was a small but reasonably effective establishment, housed in dignified comfort in the high-ceilinged rooms of the State-War-Navy building close by the White House. A staff of linen-jacketed civil service clerks maintained genteel disorder among the papers and dispatches, under the supervision of a group of gentleman officers with long experience at home and abroad. Taft's Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, showed little disposition to wrestle with the details of his office, and the day-by-day operation of the department was largely governed by the First Assistant Secretary, F. M. Huntington Wilson, a fairly typical product of the system, who had arrived at his post after several years as secretary of embassies in the Far East, followed by additional experience in the department. The inhabitants of this tight little world dreaded the arrival of a naive but dogmatic ex-professor President and a provincial, demagogic Secretary of State.

THE NEW ORDER

For their part, Wilson and Bryan came into office with long-standing political commitments against many of the foreign policies of the government and deep suspicions about the individuals connected with them. The explicit issues of 1912 were, to be sure, primarily domestic ones (Wilson did not make a major campaign speech on foreign policy), but the Democratic position had long been on the record. The vision of America's destiny shared by Wilson and Bryan had the United States leading the world, by peaceful influence and example, toward democracy and Christianity. To them, Republican foreign policy meant militarism, imperialism, and dollar diplomacy—all unsound, morally indefensible extensions of big-business philosophy. Wilson's relative inattention to foreign affairs prior to inauguration reflected his assumption that it would be a fairly simple matter to set the United States on the path of international righteousness. The principal new step contemplated was the launching of an international peace plan based on a network of treaties providing for conciliation and cooling-off periods in case of disputes. This program had long been advocated by Bryan, and he and Wilson agreed on it in principle at the same time Bryan agreed to become Secretary of State.

The Great Commoner in the State Department

Bryan kept the Department of State in a mild uproar for the entire two years of his tenure as Secretary. Beginning with his initial statement to the staff, he made it quite clear that he was a principled spoilsman. Not in the least vindictive or venal, he sincerely believed it to be his duty to replace inherently bad Republicans with inherently good Democrats—particularly if the latter had demonstrated superior wisdom and virtue in connection with the great campaign of '96. To Bryan, all the apparatus about civil service, consular service, diplomatic service, and so forth was simply a device for delaying the march of the righteous and perpetuating the old regime.

Bryan did not, however, attack the system head-on. He asked First Assistant Secretary Huntington Wilson to remain for at least a few weeks to help him get started. He also announced that A. A. Adee, who had been second assistant secretary as long as anyone could remember, and Wilbur J. Carr, another able career man who headed the consular service, would remain.[1] The third assistant secretary and the departmental counselor were soon replaced but by men who were Wilson's rather than Bryan's choices.[2] A little later Bryan installed his own men as first assistant secretary, solicitor, chief clerk, and as heads of two of the geographic divisions. Most of the rest of the departmental staff was under civil service, and there was no possibility of a clean sweep. But Bryan constantly strained at the regulations, juggled positions to give himself maximum leeway, injected political considerations into promotions and transfers, and made political appointments whenever he could—usually with scant regard for the previous standards of fitness.[3]

[1] Adee and Carr were remarkable figures in American administrative history. Adee had entered the diplomatic service in 1870, became assistant secretary in 1882, and died in office in 1924. Carr had entered as a clerk in 1892, rose to be head of the consular bureau and chief clerk, and later became an assistant secretary. His terminal post, from which he retired in 1939 after 47 years of service, was Minister to Czechoslovakia. Katherine Crane, *Mr. Carr of State* (1960).

[2] The new Counselor was John Bassett Moore, a distinguished international lawyer from Columbia University, with previous experience in the department. Wilson, who strongly felt the need for at least one solid appointment to the department, had prevailed over Moore's reluctance to get involved with Bryan.

[3] Crane, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-50. Unable to take care of all of his friends in State, Bryan sometimes referred them to his colleagues in other departments. Secretary David Houston, who was highly orthodox on monetary and most other topics, was outraged when Bryan asked him to make a place in the Department of Agriculture for the famous free silver agitator, "Coin" Harvey. David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet*, Vol. 1 (1926), p. 43.

Bryan came to the department with little administrative experience and apparently little aptitude. The holdover officials who tried to inform him of the current business of the department were disappointed to find that his interest was mainly in patronage. He had been on the job less than a week when he made himself appear foolish by raising a commotion and charging that someone had tricked him into signing a commendation to the ambassador to Mexico—a man about whom Bryan had deep suspicions. (A telegram containing a fairly innocuous and routine compliment had come to his desk in a large batch of papers, and he had signed it without examining it closely.) He tangled up the accounts on his travel expenses and disbursements from the emergency fund, made commitments for the department without considering the expense, and gave the officials who handled the managerial side of the department little support in dealing with Congress on appropriations. Yet, for all this, Bryan was genuinely well-meaning, courteous to individuals, frequently displayed a great deal of old-fashioned shrewdness, and was refreshingly irreverent about some of the traditional caste distinctions among various classes of personnel. Members of the staff came to regard him with mingled affection and exasperation.

Wilson's "Exceptional Men"

Appointing the leading ambassadors and ministers was clearly a personal privilege of the President, and Wilson began with a determination to send only the highest types of American gentlemen and scholars abroad as his envoys. "I have been thinking much, of late, of foreign appointments. I want to find exceptional men, out of the common run, for all the chief posts. Men who will *see* and think," he wrote to Bryan before inauguration.[4] While considering cabinet appointments he had assembled a list of potential diplomatic appointees. But even before inauguration he experienced frustration and the necessity of retreat from his goal. The top name on the list, the distinguished Dr. Charles W. Eliot, retired president of Harvard, to whom Wilson paid a secret visit in January 1913, showed no interest in becoming ambassador to Great Britain when he heard that Bryan was to be Secretary of State. And shortly thereafter Wilson had decided that an appointment as ambassador to France was the price he would have to pay to be rid of McCombs.

[4] Woodrow Wilson to William Jennings Bryan, letter of February 14, 1913. Wilson Papers, Library of Congress.

Wilson returned to the diplomatic appointments shortly after inauguration. He offered the London appointment to Cleveland's Secretary of State, Richard Olney, who was one of the few members of previous Democratic administrations potentially available for high office, but Olney declined for reasons of health. Wilson then made a second fruitless appeal to Eliot. Finally, he turned to his personal friend, the magazine editor Walter Hines Page, who accepted gladly.

For Germany, Wilson wanted another old friend, Henry B. Fine, a distinguished scholar from Princeton. Because the expenses of this or any other ambassadorship were far beyond the official allowances and the private means of a professor, Wilson arranged with his wealthy friend Cleveland H. Dodge, who also knew Fine, to supplement the official income. However, Fine would not accept.[5] Both Wilson and Bryan thought John R. Mott, the international Y.M.C.A. leader, an eminently suitable ambassador to China, but Mott could not be persuaded. Wilson also tried for several months, but without success, to get his wealthy friend Charles R. Crane of Chicago to become ambassador to Russia. And McCombs, much to Wilson's embarrassment and disgust, vacillated publicly for over a year before deciding not to accept the appointment to France.

Diplomatic Patronage

In the course of such negotiations, Wilson exhausted his list of blue-ribbon prospects and wore his patience thin. Preoccupied with other duties and under great pressure from the leaders of his party, he soon began appointing men who were available for the traditional reasons. Two financial backers in whom Wilson had confidence, Frederick C. Penfield and Henry Morgenthau, Sr., were sent to Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, respectively. Another pillar of Democratic finance in whom Wilson had considerably less confidence, James W. Gerard, got the Berlin appointment. The appointments to Rome, Madrid, Tokyo, and Paris eventually went to run-of-the-mill party figures. On the other hand, Wilson was pleased to be able to send such men as Brand Whitlock to Belgium and Henry Van Dyke to the Netherlands. On the whole, the top diplomatic appointments neither raised nor lowered the existing standards.

But in the appointments to less prominent capitals in Latin America

[5] A year later Wilson made the same sort of arrangement with Dodge to make it possible for Page to stay in London.

and other parts of the world, the standards were drastically lowered. Almost to a man, the career and semicareer men that Taft had put in such posts were cleaned out and replaced by a miscellaneous group of politicians with practically no qualifications for office. Such appointments kept the embassies and legations in turmoil throughout most of 1913 and 1914, and two or three open scandals resulted.[6]

Criticism for this spoliation of the diplomatic service rained on the administration but rolled easily off the back of the Secretary of State. He made no secret of his personal distaste for the type of people he found in the diplomatic service and defended, on principle, his concern for filling as many places as possible with "deserving Democrats." Wilson, although not going quite so far as Bryan, also found grounds to justify replacements. In the autumn of 1913 he wrote to Dr. Eliot:

> We find that those who have been occupying the legations and embassies have been habituated to a point of view which is very different, indeed, from the point of view of the present administration. They have had the material interests of individuals in the United States very much more in mind than the moral and public considerations which it seems to us ought to control. They have been so bred in a different school that we have found, in several instances, that it was difficult for them to comprehend our point of view and purpose. I have been genuinely distressed at the necessity of seeming to act contrary to the spirit of the merit system in any case or particular, but there are circumstances which seem to me to make a certain amount of this necessary at the opening of a new order of things.[7]

Wilson was willing to let politics as usual prevail in the selection of the chiefs of diplomatic missions and with the consular and diplomatic clerks, who were still not under civil service, but he resisted pressure from Bryan to cancel the executive orders putting the consular and diplomatic services themselves on a merit basis. These services, which were new and highly vulnerable to the change of parties, remained intact in form even though Bryan nibbled at their edges and did little to advance them. This was in part due to successful defensive tactics by Carr, who had strong support in the business world both for himself as a person and for the consular service of which he was a symbol.[8]

[6] Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (1956), pp. 97-110; Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, Vol. IV (1931), pp. 26-36. Cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson*.

[7] Wilson to Charles W. Eliot, September 17, 1913. Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 42.

[8] Crane, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-63. State Department recommendations to the President concerning transfers and promotions of consular and diplomatic officials were ordi-

The President and the Secretary

Since Bryan was by far the most prominent political figure in the cabinet, many observers expected him to manage foreign affairs with little direction from the White House. Indeed, Wilson had been warned that Bryan not only would insist on having his own way in the State Department but would try to dominate the whole cabinet. This estimate misjudged both men. From the first, the control and usually the initiative lay with the President. Bryan displayed no signs of jealousy at seeing the prize he had sought so long in the hands of another, and his genuine admiration for Wilson made it easy for him to remain in proper subordination. Although Wilson frequently became impatient with Bryan, and as time went by tended to handle more and more of the foreign relations himself, he was careful to treat Bryan with respect. Wilson also earned Bryan's gratitude by coming to his defense when the latter was under attack.[9] Bryan's genuine usefulness in reconciling differences within the party and adding to the political strength of the administration proved the wisdom of including him in the cabinet. Relations between Wilson and Bryan remained harmonious until 1915, when they parted regretfully on a point recognized by both as a matter of principle.

MEXICO

Under the conditions and customs of 1913, it would take almost a year to get Taft's ambassadors recalled and the new ones selected, cleared, instructed, and transported to their posts. Wilson and Bryan had no intention of waiting that long before trying to influence policy. Bryan was anxious to move ahead with his peace plan, which he outlined to the cabinet shortly after inauguration. He was frustrated, however, by events arising to divert him from the goal. The outstanding example was Mexico.

By inauguration day, Mexico City had calmed down after the ten days revolt, but there was unrest and sporadic violence all over the country.

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narily accompanied by scrawls from Bryan giving the informal situation in each case. Such comments as "Democrat but promoted on merit," or "Republican but have to promote on merit," were typical. Wilson Papers, Series VI, Container 54.

[9] Bryan was under attack and ridicule in the newspapers most of his early months in office. Much was made of his refusal to serve alcoholic drinks at diplomatic functions. And in the summer of 1913 there were loud demands for his resignation for accepting paid lecture engagements on the Chautauqua circuit. Through it all, he had Wilson's unwavering political support.

Foreign-owned property was being destroyed and an occasional United States citizen killed. The American public remained indignant over the murder of Madero and concerned over the general situation so close to its borders, but the Ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson, advised Washington that Huerta was the man most likely to pacify the country and that his government ought to be given diplomatic recognition. The Mexican situation was before the new cabinet in its first week, along with reports that war and revolution would break out elsewhere in Central America at the first signs of weakness or indecision by the new administration.

The basic issue apparently was not clearly perceived by the new administration, but it was a real one nevertheless. The idea of using military force in Latin America, as Roosevelt and Taft had done on occasion, was incompatible with the pacifist and anti-imperialist assumptions of Wilson and Bryan. On the other hand, they wanted the United States to exert an influence on behalf of a world order based on justice and morality. And what was to be done when benevolent nonintervention worked to the advantage of such scoundrels as Huerta?

A Surprising Statement

On March 11, only a week after inauguration, Wilson showed to the cabinet a statement he himself had drafted, declaring the principles of a policy toward "our sister republics of Central and South America." The gist of it was that the United States wanted the friendship and confidence of nations to the South, believed in their self-determination, had no selfish interests to serve, and hoped for increasing cooperation. However, cooperation was possible "only when supported at every turn by the orderly processes of just government based upon law, not upon arbitrary or irregular force." The new administration could have "no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition." One or two of the cabinet doubted that such a general pronouncement was necessary. It was also suggested that the proposed statement might be discussed, confidentially, with other major powers. Perhaps it should even be discussed with the Department of State! These objections were brushed aside, and after minor revisions the statement was released to the press.[10]

The statement caused a great stir. The American public applauded

[10] Baker, *Wilson,* IV, pp. 64-69; Houston, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44; Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* p. 320.

the noble sentiments. Professional diplomats wagged their heads at amateur diplomacy, but Latin America correctly understood an expression of displeasure with Huerta and a notice that the United States was opposed to more revolutions. Peace was maintained, outside Mexico, and the first exhibit of foreign policy based on morality rather than expediency seemed successful.

New Policies and Methods

The March 11 statement provided the semblance of a Mexican policy and gave Wilson a few weeks' time but no more than that. As the spring wore on the question persisted: What to do about Huerta? Ambassador Wilson's recommendation that the United States recognize him, as the British had done, ran against the grain of the President's feelings. Besides, the Ambassador was so prominent a member of the old crowd that anything he said was heavily discounted. For several weeks the Ambassador pressed for instructions. Finally, in June, President Wilson made himself explicit. It did not appear that Huerta's government was achieving "settled peace, authority, and justice." There was no faith in Mexico that Huerta would "safeguard constitutional rights and methods of action." Huerta should guarantee an amnesty to those rebelling against him and hold early free elections in which he would observe his previous promise not to be a candidate. If these things were done, the Mexican government could be recognized.[11]

This decision took the United States another step down the new path. Diplomatic recognition was no longer a routine transaction with a *de facto* regime but a stamp of approval, bestowed by the United States after inquiry into the constitutional legitimacy and moral standing of a new government. This position followed naturally from the moral assumptions of Wilson and Bryan, but to Latins of all persuasions, it seemed intolerable meddling.[12]

Meanwhile, Wilson and Bryan were doing something else character-

[11] Howard F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico* (1953), p. 144.

[12] There is still controversy over how radical a departure Wilson's policy of nonrecognition was. Baker devotes considerable space to precedents showing that: ". . . In the mere fact of delayed recognition or even of concern as to whether the people really supported the new regime, Wilson's position involved nothing unprecedented." *Wilson, IV*, p. 251. Cline (*op. cit.*, p. 142) insists that the implied right of the United States to interpret the Mexican constitution and to distinguish between good and bad revolutions was a radical departure and precedent that has plagued United States foreign relations ever since; he categorizes the Wilson policy as Moral Imperialism.

istic of new administrations. Suspicious of the intelligence available from official sources, they were short-circuiting the official channels with personal envoys and informants. They sent William Bayard Hale, the journalist who had just finished editing a book from Wilson's campaign speeches, to Mexico to provide them with confidential reports on both the Huerta regime and Ambassador Wilson. Bryan also sent Reginald del Valle as a separate confidential agent, and there were several other Americans roaming around Mexico more or less authorized to send private reports to Wilson and Bryan. Hale and del Valle were not clever enough to disguise their missions for long, and the Ambassador was soon indignantly demanding from the Department of State some explanation of who these people were and a disavowal of the common impression in Mexico City that they represented the administration, since they were making his position untenable.[13] This greatly embarrassed the department, but Wilson and Bryan were unmoved. By this time reports from Hale had implicated the Ambassador in the Huerta coup and were highly adverse to him in other ways. The Ambassador was shortly recalled, and his resignation accepted.

Huerta Must Go

Since sending a new ambassador would constitute recognition, Bryan selected John Lind, a former governor of Minnesota completely inexperienced in diplomacy, to go to Mexico as the President's personal representative. Lind's mission, started in August, was to negotiate with Huerta and his principal opponent, Carranza, to bring about free elections. Elections were held in October, but Huerta voided their results and retained power. By this time the reports of Lind, Hale, and others about Huerta were so black that Wilson moved a step beyond nonrecognition: By one means or another, Huerta must go!

The events leading to the fall of Huerta in July 1914 are too complicated to relate here. They extended beyond the Wilson administration's transition period. By the time Huerta resigned, Wilson had tried to induce other nations to bring sanctions against him, mediated between Huerta and the Carranza revolutionists, blinked at the smuggling of arms to Carranza despite an official United States embargo, sounded out Congress on full-scale armed intervention, occupied Mexican territory at

[13] Telegram from Ambassador Wilson to the department, June 29, 1913. Wilson Papers, Series VI, Container 350.

Vera Cruz, and acted uncooperatively in a mediation effort undertaken by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Strange tactics for an idealistic, noninterventionist President, but justified in his view by the moral objectives. American difficulties with Mexico were far from ended with the displacement of Huerta, but after 1914 the conduct of Mexican affairs gradually reverted from Wilson's direct control to other hands in the State Department, while Wilson concerned himself with the war in Europe.[14]

THE CHINA LOAN

The foreign policy launched by the week-old administration with respect to Mexico was only the first of a series of new departures. Another shift, implying a sharp repudiation of dollar diplomacy, occurred with respect to China. The Republic of China had been proclaimed a year before but was not yet recognized by most of the major powers, including the United States, on the basis that it was not in effective control of many parts of China. However, the Department of State had been encouraging a group of American bankers to participate in a six-nation consortium preparing to make a substantial loan to the Chinese government. To protect their interests, the bankers were to get liberal grants of power over Chinese public finance.[15]

Bryan had been at the State Department less than a week when representatives of the American participating banks appeared to inquire whether the new administration would continue the official blessing. Ignorant of the subject, Bryan called in Huntington Wilson and Chandler Anderson, Counselor of the department. By coincidence, the China loan was a project dear to Huntington Wilson's heart; he was the moving spirit of a group in the department that had worked for years to get American finance into China. Despite his advice, however, Bryan

[14] The preceding account of Wilson's Mexican policy is necessarily a simplified one. Cline, *op. cit.*, the standard volume on United States-Mexican relations, treats the subject extensively and comes to conclusions highly critical of Wilson. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* is only slightly less critical. *Cf.* Baker, *Wilson, IV,* for a "Wilsonian" interpretation.

[15] Participation in the banking consortium was the most recent phase of a long, complicated effort by the Roosevelt and Taft administrations to project United States political influence in China through commercial means, and vice versa. Charles Vevier, *The United States and China, 1906-13* (1955).

avoided commitment and arranged a full discussion for the cabinet meeting of March 18.

Huntington Wilson and Anderson prepared a long memorandum justifying the loan policy, but the President and Bryan were not convinced. On the 18th, Wilson produced in the cabinet another of his personal draft statements of policy, strongly negative. After some discussion and toning down, the statement was released that afternoon, without further reference to the State Department or any advance warning to the other governments involved. The statement declared that the United States government could not approve the proposed arrangement because the conditions would "touch very nearly the administrative independence of China itself." Also there was an implied responsibility on the part of the six powers that "might conceivably go to the length . . . of forcible interference." The whole business was "obnoxious to the principles upon which the government of our people rests." The government would encourage American business in China, but wanted only the Open Door.[16]

The announcement was received by the press as a repudiation of dollar diplomacy and a blow at Wall Street; on that basis, it was generally approved by Wilson's supporters. Wall Street responded promptly to the cue; the bankers announced their withdrawal from the consortium the following day. Contrary to the popular impression, the bankers had been uneasy about the venture for some time and were reasonably content to have State Department pressure released so that they could withdraw gracefully.[17] European diplomats interpreted the statement as a clever device to disengage the American bankers and flatter the government of China at the same time, but they gave Wilson more credit for sophistication than he deserved. The Japanese ambassador protested at not being consulted, and even Wilson remarked at the next cabinet meeting that it had been a slight mistake to release the policy through the press instead of diplomatic channels.[18]

Huntington Wilson immediately changed his mind about staying on to help Bryan over the transition. His indignant letter of resignation expressed the thoughts of many an old hand spurned by a new administration. His agreement to stay, he said, had been on the assumption,

[16] Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 71; Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 283-86.
[17] Vevier, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-11.
[18] Houston, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

> . . . that there would be no radical departure from the practice of this and other countries whereby the knowledge and experience of the various officials of the foreign office is made use of in the study of great questions of foreign policy. I had no reason to suppose that the officials on duty in the Department of State would learn first from the newspapers of a declaration of policy which I think shows on its face the inadequacy of the consideration given to the facts and theories involved and the failure clearly to apprehend the motives leading to and the purposes of the policy superseded. I had no reason to suppose that the fate of negotiations which had so long had the studious attention of the foreign offices of six great powers would be abruptly determined with such quite unnecessary haste and in so unusual a manner.[19]

Immediately following his reversal of the loan policy, President Wilson announced his decision to recognize the Chinese republic. The European powers were again unhappy at not being consulted and refused to follow his lead, but the American public approved. For some time the Chinese government was unable to stabilize the country, and by the end of 1913 the recognition seemed hardly consistent with the policy of nonrecognition being pursued toward Mexico. The difference, of course, was that from the administration's viewpoint the Chinese revolution had been a good revolution, Huerta's a bad one.

RELATIONS WITH JAPAN

United States-Japanese relations also came to a crisis in the early weeks of the new administration. In fact, on the day after inauguration the Japanese ambassador called on Wilson to express concern over bills pending in the California and Washington state legislatures, which would have the effect of preventing orientals from owning land in those states.

For several weeks Wilson and Bryan assured the Japanese of their good will, while trying to find a way to dampen down anti-oriental feeling on the West Coast and get the legislation modified to soften the insult to the Japanese. However, a President has no control over state legislatures, and as the legislation took shape in California, the insult grew stronger. It was particularly embarrassing to Wilson since the main backers of the bills were Democrats and Progressives, friends whose support he needed in Congress. Mid-April brought the interesting spectacle of the Secretary of State going to California to lobby in the legislature

[19] Huntington Wilson to President Wilson, March 19, 1915. Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV*, p. 72.

and plead with Governor Hiram Johnson for a veto, but the mission failed and the bill passed. Explanations of American federalism did not satisfy the Japanese, who openly talked of war. Wilson and Bryan firmly insisted that they had no idea of going to war with Japan, and during the summer of 1913 the tension eased. However, United States-Japanese relations remained unsatisfactory until this problem, like so many others, was submerged in the turmoil of World War I.

CONTROLLING THE MILITARY

An important by-product of the Japanese affair was a firm assertion of control by the new administration of its armed forces—a relatively simple matter under the conditions of 1913.

At this time the military and naval establishments still showed strong traces of the martial spirit imbued by Theodore Roosevelt; most of the high-ranking officers had made their records in the Spanish American War or risen to prominence in the decade of active interest in the armed forces that followed. The foreign policy ideas of the Wilson administration implied a substantial diminution of the role of the military, but there were no immediate plans for a shake-up. Secretary Garrison was soon on excellent terms with the ranking officers of the Army; even Leonard Wood, the controversial Chief of Staff, was not touched, despite loud congressional demands for his scalp.[20] Secretary Daniels created a mild stir in the aristocratic Navy with his democratic manners (he once scandalized the officer class by addressing an assembly of enlisted men as "you young gentlemen"), and by his declaration that a little sea duty might be good for some of the officers who had been sitting in the department since the Spanish American War, but he made no immediate major attack on the system.

As relations with Japan deteriorated, many of the senior officers felt that war was almost inevitable. Some of them obviously relished the prospect. On May 14, the Joint Board of the Army and Navy, an all-uniformed council headed by Admiral Dewey, of Spanish American War fame, met to discuss the deployment of American forces in the

[20] In this period, it might be pointed out, uniformed officers tended to be "in politics" as individuals in a way that would appear shocking at the present day. Officers maneuvered more or less openly for congressional support, and Congress frequently interfered in assignments and promotions.

Pacific. There was special concern over a possible surprise attack by Japan on the Philippines. The board recommended the immediate transfer of additional naval vessels to strengthen the Philippines, Hawaii, and Panama. This recommendation leaked to the press, and the cabinet discussed it on May 16. Secretary Garrison concurred with the board, but Secretary Daniels argued that the transfer would be an unnecessary irritant to Japan. Bryan was very angry at what appeared an attempt by the military to force the administration's hand. The President finally decided that the ships should remain where they were.

The Joint Board, however, protested the decision and urged Daniels to reopen the question with the President. This was more than Wilson could take. Informing the board, through Daniels, that it had no right to force a change in a settled policy of the administration, he ordered the board not to meet again except on his instruction. It did not meet for over two and a half years.[21]

THE CANAL TOLLS ISSUE

Wilson moved quickly on foreign policy matters under his direct control, but where congressional action was required, he proceeded with caution, as illustrated by the famous canal tolls controversy. An act of August 1912, providing for the administration of the Panama Canal when it opened, had given certain preferences to American shipping, including exemption from tolls for ships in the coastwise trade. The British objected on the ground that the exemption would violate treaty provisions for equality of treatment for ships of all nations. The Taft administration thought the proposed arrangement a reasonable exercise of proprietorship in the canal, and the Democratic platform of 1912 had approved the idea of tolls exemption for coastwise shipping on the theory that it would put competitive pressure on the transcontinental railroads. During the campaign it was such a minor point that Wilson paid little attention to it. In the interval between election and inauguration, however, the international implications began to emerge more clearly. The British stiffened their protests. The Taft administration had its last word on the subject in January 1913, when it rejected a formal British request for arbitration.

[21] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 297-99; Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of Peace* (1944), pp. 163-67.

About the same time, the numerous communications he was receiving from international law experts, most of whom thought the United States had a poor case, began to make an impression on Wilson. He was further impressed on January 31, at a meeting of the Round Table Dining Club (a select group of intellectual leaders in New York who met occasionally for dinner and an informal evening), when several friends tackled him on the subject. Wilson admitted he had not previously understood the issue and assured his friends that he would look into it.

After inauguration he made some cautious inquiries inside the administration but delayed action for over a year, being reluctant to stir up Congress for fear of endangering his domestic legislative program. Meanwhile he gave the British informal assurance that he would take proper action when the right time came. In January 1914, he could delay no longer. He called the whole Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Republicans as well as Democrats, to the White House and told them informally that he thought the exemption should be repealed, or at least suspended. On February 5, he declared his position in a public letter, and on March 5, he went to Congress to make a personal plea on the subject. The fight raged for three months with party lines completely confused, as westerners talked about sellouts to railroad monopolies and Irish politicians twisted the Lion's tail. By great pressure from the administration the repeal was pushed through Congress and signed in June 1914. Wilson fully realized what it was costing to achieve an essentially unpopular measure, but his concept of morality in foreign affairs required that it be done. He thought the accomplishment "a long step forward in putting the relationships of nations . . . on a par with the dealings of honourable men, one with another."[22]

OTHER SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

While Wilson was occupied with Mexican relations and other matters, Bryan moved briskly ahead, encountering both successes and failures, in other diplomatic ventures. As early as April 1913, he unveiled his peace plan to the Senate and to the Washington diplomatic corps, and negotiations with a number of nations were begun almost immediately. The first cooling-off treaty was signed, with El Salvador, in August 1913. During

[22] Quoted by Baker, *Wilson, IV,* p. 421. This account is based primarily on Baker's lengthy account, pp. 394-422, and on Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 304-14.

the following year such treaties were signed with twenty-nine additional countries. Throughout his tenure as Secretary of State, Bryan continued to strive for peace through pacts of various kinds, regarding his achievements in this area as his principal constructive accomplishment.[23]

Acting with Wilson's full approval, Bryan also made early efforts to eliminate some long-standing irritations in Latin American relations, but in this area he encountered the sharp realities of international affairs and the intransigence of the United States Senate. The Taft administration had been negotiating with Colombia for some time in an effort to settle the long-standing grievance of that country over the activities of the United States leading to the independence of Panama and acquisition of the Canal Zone. After the election of 1912 these negotiations broke down, as Colombia seemed to prefer to wait for the new administration. Bryan resumed negotiations, but it took until April 1914 to conclude a treaty. The terms, including a virtual apology and an indemnity of $25 million, were considered highly favorable to Colombia. When the treaty was published, there was a great uproar, sparked by Theodore Roosevelt and his friends, over the implied confession of guilt. Already angry over the way Wilson had driven the unpopular canal toll bill through, the Senate refused ratification. Despite renewed efforts from time to time by Wilson, Bryan, and subsequent Secretaries of State, the treaty remained unratified throughout the two Wilson administrations.

The situation in Nicaragua was even more complicated. In that country, the United States Marines were propping up a bankrupt and unpopular regime. The Taft administration had sought to stabilize the situation with a purchase of an option on a Nicaraguan canal route and the lease of some naval base rights, but the treaty had not been ratified when Wilson and Bryan took office. In fact, the prospects were that it could not be ratified in view of the concern of many Democratic senators over "dollar diplomacy." However, the Nicaraguan government renewed its pleas that something be done to keep the country from falling into complete chaos, and Bryan set to work in May 1913, to negotiate a new, acceptable treaty.

The ensuing negotiations led Bryan into some positions that were unexpected in view of his previous prejudice against intervention. The more he learned of Nicaraguan affairs, the more he became convinced that only a strict American tutelage could lead Nicaragua into a condition

[23] Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 280-83.

of law, order, democracy, and freedom from both European intrigue and the New York bankers. The alternative was to withdraw, leaving chaos and opening the way to revolution and a regime no more savory than the existing one. The Nicaraguan government, on its part, wanted the United States as deeply involved as possible. Consequently, the new treaty, as it took shape in the summer of 1913, provided not only for the original canal route and base rights purchases but also the establishment of a virtual protectorate over Nicaragua, modeled after the famous Platt Amendment with respect to Cuba.

The anti-imperialists were still dominant on this issue, and despite Bryan's defense of it the Senate refused to approve the treaty, being especially hostile to the protectorate features. A third treaty, without the protectorate features, was signed a year later, but Senator Borah and other anti-imperialists blocked it. Only a threat of German intrigue finally brought ratification after a third year of delay. Meanwhile, and for a long time thereafter, Bryan was involved in Nicaraguan financial and political affairs.

In summary, Wilson and Bryan burst with a considerable impact on a previously stable situation in foreign policy. A substantial shakeup of upper-level foreign service personnel was achieved, at the cost of a great loss of experienced men and the indirect expense of extreme partisanship in the selection of replacements. After a period of anxiety, the foreign service personnel at middle and lower ranks continued to serve on a merit basis.

The new administration was able, on the whole, to make important and rapid adjustments in the course of American foreign policy. In some areas, the new departures were successful. In others, headlong, personal, moralizing diplomacy on the part of the President and his Secretary of State led into unanticipated difficulties, which might have been avoided by a more careful comparison of the facts of the situation with the oversimplified assumptions on which they proceeded. "New Freedom diplomacy failed in part, therefore, not because it was ignobly conceived, but because it ignored some basic facts of life."[24]

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

CHAPTER 9

LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Long before he became President, Wilson had talked and written about the responsibility of chief executives to provide legislative leadership. In his inaugural address and other public statements, he repeated his ideas about the roles of nation, President, and political party in the legislative process. The party was the instrument through which the nation achieved its purposes; the President, as leader of both nation and party, was the supreme interpreter of national purpose to the party.[1] Wilson now proceeded to articulate these purposes and to mobilize the party to achieve them.

THE PARTY IN CONGRESS

Immediately after his nomination Wilson had moved, as a matter of right, to make the Democratic national headquarters his instrument. But the party in Congress, to which Wilson turned after election, had to be handled with more caution. Here there were party chieftains of long service, with power bases independent of the President and a certain standing of their own as interpreters of the national will. There were also proprieties to be observed; Presidents—and particularly Presidents-elect—had to avoid seeming to dictate to Congress on matters that were distinctly the business of Congress. Despite appeals from individual con-

[1] Wilson's thought and practice in this respect have been well summarized in Arthur W. Macmahon, "Woodrow Wilson as Legislative Leader and Administrator," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 50 (September 1956), pp. 641-75.

gressmen to take a more active part, Wilson was careful not to intervene in the activities of Congress between election and inauguration. He was, of course, handicapped by lack of time and detailed knowledge of most of the specific issues, but he seems also to have feared overplaying his hand by moving in too rapidly on matters that did not yet officially concern him. It is significant that on the one occasion when he did take a stand (concerning the one-term amendment) his appeal to Congress was made privately, and the formality of congressional initiative was observed in getting his opinion to the legislative leaders.

Both before and after inauguration, Wilson also avoided overt involvement in another controversy of great potential importance to him, concerning the Democratic leadership in Congress. It must be remembered that antipathy to political organization and political bosses was a key article of progressive faith; Wilson's own appeal was in part as an anti-boss symbol. Only two years before, insurgents in the House, led by George W. Norris of Nebraska, had successfully risen up against the concentration of power held by Speaker Cannon. Now with progressivism triumphant in the nation, a change in party control, and a flood of new congressmen coming to join the large number of first-termers elected in 1910, there was talk of further reforms. Restlessness was most pronounced in the Senate, where progressive Democrats were dissatisfied with the leadership of Thomas S. Martin, of Virginia, and dismayed over the conservative senators, most of them from the South, who would succeed to extremely powerful committee chairmanships in the new Congress under the normal operation of the seniority rule.

During the course of the lame duck Congress, it became apparent that progressive first- and second-term Democrats would dominate the new House of Representatives in such numbers that they could hardly be denied their way in legislation, and talk of challenging the leadership and further reform of the rules gradually subsided. On the Senate side, however, the progressives made contact with others due to join them in March and prepared to revolt. The crisis came late in February, when over half of the Democratic senators in the new Congress met and agreed to back John W. Kern, of Indiana, for majority leader.[2] A few

[2] *New York World* (Feb. 25, 1913). Claude G. Bowers, *The Life of John Worth Kern* (1918), pp. 282-89. Kern's selection was somewhat unusual in that he had only two years' seniority in the Senate. However, he had standing as an elder of the party as a whole, having been governor of Indiana and Bryan's running mate in 1908. Kern was a reliable progressive with a reputation for tact and conciliation, whose selection would not unnecessarily affront senators with conservative leanings.

days later Martin announced his desire to retire from the leadership, and when the regular caucus met on the day after inauguration, Kern was elected unanimously. The senators who organized this movement had been prominent among the visitors to Trenton, where they presumably received quiet encouragement. Wilson, however, avoided direct involvement and made ambiguous statements when pressed by reporters.[3]

The election of the new Democratic leader was only the first step. Kern immediately set up a steering committee (under his own chairmanship), which, although giving some representation to the old conservative element, was controlled by the progressives. The steering group then took up the problem of committee assignments, which required delicate negotiations lasting several weeks.

There is authentic evidence that Wilson, by now in the White House and beginning to think specifically about his legislative program, was seriously tempted to intervene and try to prevent certain key committee chairmanships from going to extreme conservatives. The outstanding case involved Senator Furnifold M. Simmons of North Carolina, an anti-Wilson, high-tariff Democrat who was in line to be chairman of the Finance Committee, which would control tariff legislation. However, when Wilson's concern about Simmons became known, Josephus Daniels and others counseled caution; such an intervention would alienate too much of the Senate. Simmons let it be known, indirectly, that he intended to support the President, and the issue was not joined.[4]

Some writers on Wilson have put a great deal of emphasis on his failure to challenge Simmons, considering that it implied a decision to work through the party as it stood—an abandonment of the goal of remaking the Democratic party in favor of the immediate legislative objectives of 1913. While the short-range goal was achieved, it is said, the long-range effect was to strengthen southern and conservative influences in the party and to set definite limits to the reforms that could be

[3] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 17 and 30, 1912; Jan. 8, 14 and 19, 1913); *New York World* (Jan. 4 and 16, 1913). Bowers, *op. cit.*, p. 289, states: "It was not a secret that President Wilson would be entirely satisfied to risk his measures in the senate under his [Kern's] leadership." However, the present author has found no evidence in the Wilson papers or other biographical material indicating that Wilson was a prime mover in the affair.

[4] Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of Peace* (1944), pp. 221-22; Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom,* pp. 183-84; Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters,* Vol. IV (1931), pp. 99-103. Cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson.*

accomplished during the two Wilson administrations.[5] The turning point, if it was one, is much clearer in retrospect than it must have been at the time. As of March 1913, there was reason to believe that substantial reforms in the Democratic party in Congress were being achieved. The committee assignments that Kern and his steering committee recommended after lengthy consideration and got accepted after long discussions in the Democratic caucus were considered only slightly short of revolutionary. Seniority was not abandoned as a governing principle, but its application was limited so that each senior senator got only one, rather than two or three of the most desirable posts. In cases where there seemed no alternative to giving a key chairmanship to a conservative, the committee was stacked with members calculated to be responsive to the new leadership. Simmons, for example, got his chairmanship but found himself surrounded by Democrats who could be counted on to carry out the tariff reform plank in the 1912 platform. And to clinch their control, the progressives amended the Senate rules to take away many of the powers previously exercised arbitrarily by the committee chairmen. Under the new rules, a majority of a committee might call meetings, and a majority of the majority members could name subcommittees and conferees. Thus congressional reforms that seemed significant and greatly enhanced the prospects for Wilson's legislative program were achieved without open intervention by the President.[6]

TARIFF REFORM

From inauguration day onward, Wilson kept in close touch with Oscar Underwood, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who was preparing a bill to carry out the Democratic pledge for a drastic lowering of tariff rates. As soon as Underwood reported that he was ready (on March 17), Wilson issued the official call for a special session of Congress beginning on April 7. In the meantime, he dug into the details of the subject, reviewing the draft bill in a long session with Underwood on March 24. On April 1, he told Underwood that the committee's plan to continue protection on sugar and wool would be unacceptable, and the committee agreed to make the change.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 102; Macmahon, *op. cit.*, pp. 654-55. *Cf.* Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 152-64.

[6] Bowers, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-95; "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 47 (April 1913), pp. 292-94.

Wilson to the Hill

Shortly before the special session opened, Wilson announced that he would appear before Congress in person to read his message on the tariff. This bold stroke, restoring a custom that had lapsed in Jefferson's time, dramatized Wilson's leadership and focused national attention on the issue. There was a good deal of grumbling in Congress about "speeches from the throne," and when Wilson mounted the rostrum on April 8 the atmosphere was tense. He began by expressing his pleasure at proving that the President was "not a mere department of the government hailing Congress from some isolated island of jealous power," but was "a human being trying to cooperate with other human beings in a common service." He spoke only ten minutes, but by the time he had completed his address he had his audience under control. The innovation was a great success.[7]

The Underwood bill was immediately brought before the Democratic caucus of the House. During the several days of intermittent caucus discussion that followed, Wilson kept in close touch with Underwood and other key congressmen. Success was virtually assured when the caucus rejected crippling amendments and voted to make it a strict party measure. Further debate in the Ways and Means Committee and on the floor of the House was almost a formality. On May 8, by a vote of 281 to 139, the House passed the bill, which provided for a drastic general reduction of tariff rates and free entry for many products previously enjoying protection. As permitted by the Sixteenth Amendment, which had been ratified in February, a moderate tax on personal incomes was added to recoup the estimated loss of $100 million in annual revenue.

Resistance in the Senate

It was obvious that there would be stiffer resistance in the Senate. On the day after his initial appearance in the House, Wilson went to the

[7] It is uncertain and probably unimportant where Wilson got the idea. In view of his interest in closing the legislative-executive gap, it is quite possible that he had had it for years. As already noted (Chap. 3), Walter Hines Page suggested it to him immediately after election. *Cf.* David Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson* (1924), pp. 81-82, who says the idea came from one of his fellow-correspondents, Oliver P. Newman.

President's Room in the Capitol near the Senate chamber, where he conferred with Democrats in order to nail a revolt over the free sugar and free wool proposal.[8] He followed with letters, discussions, and conferences at the White House, and won a preliminary victory on May 16 when the Senate narrowly rejected a motion to refer the bill to committee for hearings.

Meanwhile, lobbyists for particular commodities and industries were building up heavy pressure on individual senators to fight for special exemptions when the bill came on the floor for general debate. This maneuver had cut to pieces most previous tariff bills, and Wilson, recognizing the danger, attacked again. On May 26, after conferring with the cabinet, he issued a statement strongly condemning the lobbyists. Pointing out that "money without limit" was being spent to create an "artificial opinion" about the bill, he called on true public opinion to "check and destroy" the menace. This caused a great stir in the country. The opposition, thinking that Wilson had over-reached himself and hoping to expose undue pressure on Congress from the White House, demanded and got an investigation of lobbying in both the Senate and House. However, the maneuver backfired when Senator La Follette forced a disclosure of the private interests of individual senators that might make them susceptible to lobbying. Public opinion rallied to the side of the President, and by the time the investigation was a few weeks old, Wilson was in a stronger position than ever.

Again forcing the issue, the managers of the bill took the unusual step of bringing it before the Senate Democratic caucus and succeeded in having it declared a party measure.[9] By early July, when the bill reached the stage of floor debate, the back of the opposition was broken. The opponents insisted on debating the bill most of the summer, but Wilson kept the pressure on and beat off damaging amendments. Late in the summer there was trouble from a different quarter as a substantial number of progressives reached the conclusion that the rates established by the income tax section of the bill were too low. After a series of negoti-

[8] This journey to the Hill also attracted great attention, inasmuch as it was the first such use of the President's Room since Lincoln's time. Wilson held conferences there on several later occasions during that first session.

[9] In the Senate, party caucuses on legislative matters were infrequent, and it was almost unprecedented for the caucus to demand adherence to its decision. There was naturally considerable resistance to this invasion of individual senatorial conscience, and even many senators who were for the bill objected to the procedure. But in the end most of them went along. *New York Times* (June 21, 1913).

ations with the administration, the maximum surtax rate was raised from 3 to 6 per cent. Finally, the Senate passed the bill, and the House accepted the Senate's amendments; Wilson signed the bill on October 3, thus redeeming his first major campaign pledge.[10]

CAUTION IN OTHER FIELDS

While the tariff bill was in progress, Wilson began to probe other policy fields in which he had commitments or special interests, or in which problems had been left over from Taft. By congressional authorization, he appointed a Rural Credits Commission to investigate and suggest a policy in that area. Wilson screened possible appointees to a Commission on Industrial Relations, which had been previously authorized but not established because the Senate would not confirm Taft's nominees. At Wilson's suggestion, Postmaster General Burleson quietly looked into the possibility of federal ownership of the telegraph and telephone industry. Attorney General McReynolds pressed pending antitrust cases and began casting around for language that might amend the Sherman Act along lines suggested by Wilson during the campaign. These were all complicated matters, on which it would take a considerable time to assess the technicalities and political forces and come up with a program. This fitted nicely with Wilson's general strategy of avoiding unnecessary confusion or premature controversy on other subjects while he was trying to focus attention on the issues that were ripe for legislative action.

One legacy from Taft had to be handled especially gingerly. This was the Sundry Civil Appropriation bill, which Taft had vetoed on inauguration morning because of its rider prohibiting use of any of the funds on antilabor prosecutions under the Sherman Act. When the bill—and its rider—were re-passed in the special session, Wilson made the best compromise he could. He avoided a direct clash with Congress and organized labor, plus the administrative difficulties of leaving certain agencies without appropriations, by signing the bill. He balanced this concession to what Taft had called "class legislation" by a statement condemning special exemptions to general legislation, especially by legislative rider.

[10] Baker, *Wilson, IV*, pp. 93-130; Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 177-97.

THE FEDERAL RESERVE ACT

Meanwhile, Wilson had moved to the second main item of his early legislative program—banking and currency reform. In 1913 almost all parties and interests felt the need for some governmental action to reduce regional inequities in the supply of credit, provide a more flexible currency supply, and permit faster mobilization of financial reserves in periods of crisis. Unfortunately, there were wide differences of opinion about what should be done. Aside from technical problems, the main questions concerned the extent of central control of the banking industry to be established, and the respective roles in the regulation of the government and the industry itself. The Republican solution, the so-called Aldrich Plan of 1912, had been acceptable to the bankers but not to the progressives, who considered it a Wall Street proposal. The matter was still pending in the spring of 1913.

Developing a Democratic Position

The hearings conducted by Congressman Pujo in December and January before inauguration sharpened public interest in banking reform. Carter Glass, who was scheduled to become chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, held extensive hearings and consultations with leading bankers. He also made two trips to New Jersey to see Wilson, who made some important suggestions. By inauguration day, Wilson and Glass had tentatively agreed on a plan for banking reform that Glass thought the bankers might accept. The possibility of banking as well as tariff legislation in the special session was discussed in public, but Wilson refused to commit himself, even after the session opened.

When the details of Glass's draft bill leaked out, around the first of May, Wilson found himself in the middle of a controversy. The bankers were alarmed at the substitution of a federal reserve board at Washington (which had been Wilson's idea) for the privately owned central bank that had been the capstone of the Aldrich proposal. Democratic radicals and progressives also found the Glass bill unsatisfactory, although for varying reasons. Some feared any sort of central control and wanted a series of autonomous regional reserve banks; others wanted a central institution but under definite governmental control instead of the

mixed government-industry control Glass envisaged. Most of the progressives also insisted that the government and not the banks should issue the currency, and various other antitrust and agricultural credit features were desired.

The controversy raged for several weeks. Colonel House made the rounds among his banker friends, Glass, McAdoo, Bryan, and Senator Robert L. Owen, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, but he could not get them together. The progressive Democrats considered the Glass bill a repudiation of the last three party platforms, and Bryan prepared to break with the administration. McAdoo produced a substitute plan to tie the whole structure into the Treasury Department, which he hoped would appeal to Bryan. It did, but the idea of so much federal control horrified Glass, who not only put his case strongly to Wilson but aroused the bankers to see that the Glass bill was weak medicine compared to what they might get from the progressives. Wall Street showed signs of nervousness and credit tightened. Conservatives urged Wilson to let the matter drop for a while.

However, by this time the House had finished with the tariff bill, and Wilson determined to get agreement on an administration proposal. On June 9, after strong appeals from Glass, he persuaded McAdoo to give up his Treasury proposal in favor of a series of regional reserve banks to be topped by a federal reserve board. However, the issues of representation on the federal reserve board and government or private issuance of the currency threatened to split the administration. Wilson sought the counsel of Louis Brandeis, who advised that the progressives were right; these were both essentially public functions. In mid-June, Wilson took this position, much to the concern of Glass. In an attempt to get him to change his mind, Glass brought in a delegation of bankers. Wilson refused to be budged. He considered it essential to keep Bryan and the progressives behind the plan.

Action in Congress

Having reluctant consent from both the right and left wings of his counseling group, Wilson called the Democratic members of the House Banking and Currency Committee to the White House and went over the plan with them. On June 23, he made his second appearance before the two houses of Congress to appeal for a redemption of a major campaign pledge.

The fight raged for six months. In the House, additional concessions had to be made to southern agrarians, who for a second time seemed on the verge of separating Bryan from the administration. After the addition of an agricultural credit program, Bryan asked his following to support the President. Opposition subsided, and the bill passed the House by a large majority on September 18.

The violent opposition of the banking industry (and conservatives generally) focused on the Senate. The Banking and Currency Committee dawdled over the bill until October, then insisted on holding hearings. Conservatives thundered that at last Bryan's plan to ruin the country seemed about to succeed, and a few mollifying amendments were made. Three Democratic members of the committee bolted, and it took intensive effort on Wilson's part to get them back in line. The committee did not report on the bill until the middle of November. Under great pressure from the White House, the Senate Democratic leaders made the bill a party measure and forced it on the floor with a special rule requiring the Senate to meet for thirteen hours a day until the bill was passed. The bill was debated on the floor from November 24 to December 19 and finally passed, 54-34. Differences between the Senate and House versions were quickly ironed out, and Wilson signed the bill on December 23, with eloquent tributes to the loyalty and hard work of Glass, Owen, and McAdoo.[11]

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Passage of the Tariff Act and the Federal Reserve Act signified the full maturity of the Wilson administration. In less than ten months, two major campaign pledges had been fulfilled with complex legislation which, by the verdict of history, has been judged sound and constructive despite its controversial origins. These two laws came after years of discussion and agitation had produced a widespread willingness to act, but their passage was in no sense inevitable. In large part they were the product of Wilson's leadership and political strategy.

Success resulted from such decisions as: to include Bryan in the cabinet and thus be able to use his political strength; to seek major legis-

[11] This account of the enactment of the Federal Reserve Act is based primarily on the accounts of Baker, *Wilson, IV*, pp. 131-202, and Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom*, pp. 199-240.

lation immediately after inauguration while Wilson's popularity and political strength were at the peak; to work through rather than around the party organization in Congress; to compromise with respect to patronage and the civil service; and to minimize the attrition of congressional attention and support by deferring matters that were either less pressing or too complex to be resolved quickly. Wilson was, as one student of the subject has said, ". . . the first President to develop systematically the legislative powers of his office."[12]

[12] Lawrence H. Chamberlain, *The President, Congress, and Legislation* (1946), p. 17.

CHAPTER 10

THE END OF INNOCENCE[1]

The Taft-Wilson transition was the first party overturn in the modern era of the Presidency. In the leisurely pace, the old-fashioned manners, the intimate scale of government activity, and some of the accessories, like the cow on the White House lawn, there did indeed linger a great deal of nineteenth-century simplicity and innocence. Taft and Wilson were the last President and President-elect to ride to the Capitol in a horse-drawn carriage.

But the industrial age had arrived, and implicit in some of Wilson's solutions to the nation's problems, not to mention events soon to come in Europe, was the growth of big, complex, impersonal government. The Presidency could never again be what it had been before Theodore Roosevelt, even if Wilson had wanted it so—which he did not. The problems confronting Wilson and the manner in which he tackled them were more in the style of the modern than of the horse and buggy Presidency. The overturn of 1913, then, was a turning point, the last such event in what appears in retrospect as the happy, uncomplicated era before World War I. It is a suitable bench mark for a study of the Presidency and party overturn in modern times.

[1] The title phrase is borrowed from a charming blend of history, biography, and reminiscences about Woodrow Wilson, the young Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Josephus Daniels by the son of the latter: Jonathan Daniels, *The End of Innocence* (1954).

CRISIS AND CUSTOM

The constitutional and statutory timetable for the presidential events of 1912-13 was clearly a remnant of the past. The four-month interval between election and inauguration was perhaps a reasonable allowance for preparing a President-elect and bringing him from some remote part of the country by stagecoach, but Wilson was only a half day's ride from Washington by train. He was able, without making any pre-election preparations to speak of, to take a month's vacation outside the country, to devote weeks to choosing his cabinet, to run the government of New Jersey on the side, and to arrive in Washington in a state of readiness that surprised contemporary observers, however inadequate it may seem from the vantage point of the present. During this leisurely warm-up, the governmental arena was occupied by a defeated and almost powerless President and a superseded, irresponsible Congress. The government continued to run, mostly from momentum, but its capacity to make high policy decisions or to respond to national emergencies was seriously impaired. Congress adjourned at the instant of the new President's arrival, so that in the ordinary course of things the Executive and the Legislature would not confront each other until December. The pace of the turnover seemed to a few observers to be unduly deliberate—there were, after all, many men yet alive who could remember the tragic drift of events in the winter of 1860-61. But the Civil War seemed unique and long ago, and there was little interest in constitutional tinkering to narrow the gap in governmental power.

Neither was there, by 1913, a great deal of extra-legal precedent and usage to bridge that gap. To be sure, outgoing officials were expected to behave like gentlemen, tidy up their jurisdictions, and be courteous to their successors when they appeared. In this respect, Taft and his associates did what was expected of them. Taft's attempts to make contact with Wilson suggests some recognition that more effective communication between President and President-elect would be desirable, but Wilson's cautious response kept the ensuing exchange within narrow limits. The State Department's roundabout report to Wilson about the Balkan War, and Secretary of War Stimson's thinly veiled plea for consultations about the Mexican crisis, were also efforts to circumvent the code of gentlemanly indifference without risking loss of dignity. There is no way of knowing how far the Taft administration might have gone if Wilson

had responded, but even the Mexican crisis was not enough to break down the inhibitions on direct, publicly visible communication between the two regimes. Wilson himself clearly preferred not to be involved with Taft, and there were no precedents suggesting anything else.

One well-established precedent, of which Wilson took full advantage, was the custom of calling a special session of Congress so that the new President did not have to wait nine months before seeking legislation. Wilson not only called the special session, but he set precedents of his own by appearing before Congress in person and taking a series of vigorous steps to dramatize the issues and bring the members of his party into line. It was in the area of post-inaugural legislative leadership, rather than in continuity between administrations, that the 1912-13 experience contributed to the future.

For his time, Wilson's pre-inaugural preparations appeared to be carried on diligently and to reach a high degree of completeness, but there were some striking shortcomings. Wilson had to start from the position he found himself in on election day. Little advance thought had been given to personal staff, to appointments, to policy research, or to political arrangements and understandings. The campaign organization headed by the unfortunate McCombs seemed more of a liability than an asset, and the personal staff headed by Tumulty had capacity for only limited types of assistance. There was no other choice than to call on personal friends and colleagues such as Page, House, and others. Fortunately, the necessity coincided with Wilson's preferences; he liked to keep in close personal touch with all arrangements.

During his preparatory period Wilson seemed enormously busy, but almost half of his time actually was spent on vacation or on New Jersey business. His numerous conferences with party leaders were useful but exceedingly general in content; staff members with moderate prestige and Wilson's confidence, had they been available, probably could have assumed much of this burden. The process of choosing the cabinet was carried on so deliberately that time almost ran out. The final selection was made in haste in the final week before inauguration. Little was done prior to inauguration about appointments below the cabinet level. Since there was no time to master the entire range of policy issues awaiting the attention of the new administration, Wilson wisely chose to concentrate on a handful of matters on which he anticipated legislative activity. However, he arrived in office largely uninformed about the state of foreign affairs and the current managerial aspects of the Presidency.

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

The relation between Wilson and his political party was crucial to the entire transition experience. Wilson arrived in the Presidency with a deeply held and elaborately articulated idea that party leadership was the key to presidential performance. His determination to play the role he had written in advance gave unusual unity, vigor, and success to the early months of his Presidency. Yet his concepts of party leadership were flexible enough to accommodate courses of action that seemed surprising and inconsistent to some observers—an excellent case of theory guiding action but modified by contact with practical necessities.

Taken literally, some of Wilson's writings about the Presidency suggested the completely dominating, driving, demanding party leader. In New Jersey, too, he had led his party from somewhere above and beyond it. He had asserted leadership, demanded support, and did not hesitate to challenge and displace lesser leaders who stood in his way. Supremacy over party policy and party organization was treated as a matter of right and with relatively little recognition of mutual obligation. As he campaigned for the Presidency, Wilson's party relations were handled in a similar manner. He insisted on tight control of the campaign organization. After election, when faced with the McCombs problem, he turned away from the party organization as such, and during his two administrations the national headquarters was reduced to the status of a service organization, taking its orders out of the back door of the White House. It was almost as a matter of prerogative, too, that Wilson assumed national policy leadership for his party. Making the most of the power gained by leading the party to victory, he took the initiative in consulting the party leaders in Congress, dominated the discussions about priorities and legislative strategy, and appeared personally before Congress to ask—almost demand—the measures he desired.

Despite this firm line, which has been attached to Wilson's historical image, he often played the party leadership role in a softer manner. On occasions he deferred to what he knew was the preponderance of sentiment within the party, or hesitated to assert himself for fear the party would not follow him, or declined to take the responsibility of making decisions in party affairs. For example, in the unsettled period immediately after election, Wilson was unprepared to take a firm hand in party affairs at the state level. For the most part he accepted the party organiza-

tion, both in Congress and in the states, largely as it was and seemed to shrink from the conflict that would have been required for the thoroughgoing party reforms many of his friends desired and expected. He acquiesced in several raids on the civil service and allowed many appointive positions to be used as strictly party patronage. He frequently sacrificed lesser goals for the sake of party harmony and tempered his expectation of loyal support with the realistic attitude that such support could not be demanded too often.

At any rate, Wilson's bold but shrewd exercise of leadership, aided by fortunate circumstances, enabled him to make several striking successes as a legislative leader in the initial months of his Presidency—successes he was rarely able to duplicate in his remaining years in the White House. By his active and overt participation in the shaping of legislation, including direct personal appeals made to congressmen individually and collectively, he set standards of legislative leadership that became the norms for Presidents to come.

IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The record in foreign affairs in the first months of Wilson's administration is harder to assess. By sheer acts of will on the part of the President and the Secretary of State, several important policy changes were made. Regardless of the intent or the eventual success of these policies, the fact is that they were arrived at on the basis of oversimplified concepts of reality developed during long years of opposition, rather than on careful analysis of the facts from the viewpoint of a responsible administration. It took Wilson and Bryan some time to learn that foreign policy could not be enunciated in isolation from the policies of other powers and that a change in United States policy does not necessarily make objective changes in the world with which it deals. Thus, policy changes announced with the best of intent sometimes seemed to come down to posturing and windy moralizing, followed by roundabout return to positions surprisingly like those of the previous administration. This was most characteristic of Wilson's policy toward Latin America. Concerning Europe and the Far East he was more circumspect, despite a good deal of initial uncertainty created by his style and attitude toward international relations.

Wilson began with the not totally unjustified assumption that the lead-

ing members of the diplomatic corps were highly committed to the policies of the previous administration. However, he showed relatively little selectivity in dealing with them, preferring to replace them rather than find out by experience which ones might be amenable to new directions. Despite his initial determination to fill the diplomatic posts with men of outstanding ability, he eventually succumbed to pressures pushing him in other directions and staffed the embassies with men who were no less political but on the whole less able and experienced than their predecessors. However, Wilson's dedication to the principle of civil service saved the nucleus of the diplomatic and consular corps already under the merit system.

THE PRESIDENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The turnover of 1913 was a considerable shock to the federal administrative system. It came after a decade of expanding governmental activity, rapid extension of the merit system, administrative stability, and concern for more efficient methods. Among the incoming Democrats, victorious after sixteen years of opposition, political values clearly took precedence over administrative ones. Wilson himself, although not oblivious to administration, was principally concerned with policy and legislation; the administrative reform activity sponsored by Taft was allowed to lapse. Although the bulk of the departmental employees were under the merit system, there were enough posts at the disposal of the new cabinet members to permit a substantial turnover at the upper levels. Means also were found, within the general boundaries of the merit system, to maneuver assignments and appointments to favor Democrats. The greatest pressure on the civil service, however, came from Democrats in Congress and in the state party organizations; such people were not only hungry for patronage but were also unwilling to accept the degree of neutrality claimed for the expanding civil service. During his first year in the White House, Wilson acquiesced in several breaches of the merit principle for the sake of party relations; after that he was successful in holding the line.

It is difficult to say how serious the administrative disruption was in terms of the expectations of the time. Such handling of the bureaucracy was normal, perhaps even moderate, as compared to previous similar occasions. However, the unwillingness of the Democrats to accept what

they regarded as a Republicanized bureaucracy on its own terms resulted in a more severe overhauling than was expected by officials who had come to think of themselves as permanent and nonpartisan. It must be remembered, however, that in 1913 the concept of the upper civil service as the neutral, continuing custodian of technical and managerial competence and the indispensable adviser on policy was only beginning to be institutionalized. By and large the bureaucracy consisted of political officers on the one hand and narrow technicians or clerks on the other, and a change of administrations was expected to bring a wholesale turnover and consequent discontinuity of policy at the upper levels. A few individuals, such as Adee at the Department of State, survived because they were indispensable to keeping the machine running even at idling speed. But they, like the rest of the bureaucracy, were in a dependent position—sometimes useful but not often influential.

A PERSONALITY AND THE PRESIDENCY

The unique personality of Woodrow Wilson was by no means the least important factor in shaping the events related in this chapter. Rooted deep in his make-up were a religious sense of mission and a psychological need for domination and leadership that gave him conviction, confidence, tenacity, and, on occasion, audacity in his political relationships. Drive, intelligence, and persuasiveness took him to the Presidency and to achievements in his first year that made a lasting imprint on the nation and its political institutions. Whether they sought to emulate or to avoid it, Wilson's successors in the White House would have to live with his image of the Presidency.

PART THREE

THE WILSON–HARDING TRANSITION OF 1920-1921

"To reverse and undo what has been done by a predecessor, is very often considered by a successor as the best proof he can give of his own capacity and desert. . . . These considerations, and the influence of personal confidences and attachments, would be likely to induce every new President to promote a change of men to fill the subordinate stations; and these causes together could not fail to occasion a disgraceful mutability in the administration of the government."

—ALEXANDER HAMILTON

CHAPTER 11

A REPUBLICAN VICTORY

Early in 1920 the political stage was set for another presidential transition. The Democratic surge that began in 1910 had made its high watermark by the middle of Woodrow Wilson's first term. In 1916 Wilson was re-elected by a narrow margin over Charles Evans Hughes, the candidate of the reunited Republicans. Shortly after Wilson's second inauguration, the United States entered World War I. Congress, still barely under Democratic control, gave support to Wilson's war policies, but there was increasing resentment in both parties over his uncompromising leadership and the inevitable executive domination of the war effort. Aware of his insecure position, Wilson made his famous plea, in the congressional campaign of 1918, for the election of Democratic congressmen who would support his measures. His appeal was rejected, and the Republicans prepared to organize Congress in the spring of 1919.

Meanwhile the Armistice was signed. Turning his back on Congress and most domestic political considerations, Wilson sailed for Europe and the Paris Peace Conference. He returned with the Treaty of Versailles, which included the Covenant of the League of Nations, and asked the Senate for ratification. It soon appeared that approval could not be secured unless reservations to the covenant were included in the resolution of ratification. While Wilson was willing to consider a separate statement or resolution of interpretation, he insisted that reservations in the operative resolution itself would vitiate the treaty and were therefore completely unacceptable.

Hoping to rally popular support for his position, Wilson undertook

a strenuous speaking tour that ended in a physical collapse. In October 1919, he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. As he slowly recovered, his determination not to compromise remained unshaken. The treaty came to a vote in the Senate in November, and again in March, failing ratification both times. Following the leadership of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, most senators were unwilling to approve the treaty in its original form, and at Wilson's urging several Democratic senators joined the irreconcilable opponents of any treaty whatever in blocking ratification with reservations. The election of 1920, Wilson said, would constitute "a great and solemn referendum" on the treaty issue.

In the interim the administration drifted without effective leadership. Wilson made a partial recovery during 1920, but his physical and political weakness seemed only to increase his intransigence. Congress and the administration quarreled about the dismantling of the military establishment, the liquidation of wartime economic controls, and various other matters. Postwar readjustments caused distress in several sectors of the economy, especially agriculture. The public seemed sick of regulations, high prices, and stern idealistic leadership. Republican prospects for regaining the Presidency grew better with every passing day.

The death of Theodore Roosevelt in 1919 had removed the most towering figure from the Republican landscape, and Hughes had buried himself in law practice after the defeat of 1916 and was apparently unavailable for a second nomination. Nevertheless, the Republicans did not lack for candidates. Most of Roosevelt's friends quickly gathered behind another former Rough Rider, General Leonard Wood, ex-Chief of Staff of the Army. Wood was still on active duty, playing a martyr's role at a post in the Midwest after Wilson's refusal to give him an overseas command during the war. Another major candidate with a proven record as a vote getter and administrator was Governor Frank O. Lowden of Illinois. Also in the field was Senator Hiram Johnson of California, who combined domestic progressivism with irreconcilable opposition to the League and other international entanglements. Among the favorite sons and others frequently mentioned were Governor Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts, who had attracted nationwide attention during the Boston police strike; Herbert Hoover, who had won admiration for his efficient administration of food and relief programs during the war; Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University; Governor William C. Sproul of Pennsylvania; and Senator Warren Gamaliel Harding of Ohio.

"GEE, BUT HE'D MAKE A GREAT-LOOKING PRESIDENT. . . ."

On the record, Harding was about the least impressive candidate in the lot. Born in 1865, the son of a country doctor, Harding grew up in small towns in Ohio. In his youth he made brief tries at college, reading law, and teaching school, then became proprietor of a feeble newspaper in his home town. Over the next twenty years, Harding gradually developed the *Marion Star* into a prosperous, if not journalistically distinguished, small city daily. It was easy for a newspaper man, who also happened to be endowed with a handsome appearance and a pleasant manner, to move into local politics. Climbing the Republican party ladder, he went to the Ohio state senate in 1899 and became lieutenant governor in 1904.

Harding's initial ambitions were modest. He performed acceptably in the offices he held and displayed some skill as a factional peacemaker, but he showed no signs of serious purposes and little interest in personal leadership. He sought mainly to be a good organization man, who might some day have his turn at the governorship and then retire to his newspaper. His wife, however, had greater ambitions for him, and so did some of his friends, particularly Harry M. Daugherty, a Columbus lawyer, lobbyist, and dabbler in state politics. "Gee, but he'd make a great-looking President; we'll put it over sometime, Jess!" Daugherty is said to have remarked to a third Ohio crony, Jess Smith, at a time when Harding was still an obscure state legislator.[1]

Moving Up in Politics

Under Daugherty's guidance, Harding secured the nomination for governor of Ohio in 1910 but was beaten by the incumbent in what proved to be a bad Republican year. He remained active in the party and stuck with the regulars in the Republican crisis of 1912, making a speech from a badly split Ohio delegation to renominate Taft at the Republican national convention. This brought him a second major opportunity, and in 1914 he was elected to the United States Senate.

Harding made a moderately favorable impression on other members of his party in Washington. As an Ohio Republican in the lineage of

[1] Mark Sullivan, *Our Times*, Vol. 6 (1935), p. 26.

McKinley and Taft, he joined the conservative party elders in opposition to Wilson's New Freedom measures. When he showed some talent for florid oratory, he was identified as an attractive but reliable "new face" and was chosen keynoter and permanent chairman of the 1916 Republican convention. After a fair performance in the party limelight, Harding retired to the relative obscurity appropriate to a first-term senator. He occupied himself with routine committee chores but did not become identified with any major legislation or take a particularly prominent part in debate. He supported the war but was a regular critic of the administration. In 1919 he demanded reservations to the League Covenant. His outstanding characteristics were his persistent affability, which kept him on good personal terms with most of his colleagues of both parties, and his physical appearance. Tall, well-built, and graying, with rugged handsome features, Harding was one of the most impressive looking men in public life.

Harding thoroughly liked being in the Senate. The easygoing pace of official duties suited his temperament and left plenty of time for golf, poker, and other male diversions. He and his wife enjoyed the Washington social life, the travel, and the opportunities for association with wealthy and prominent people that came with Senate membership. As he neared the end of his first term, his principal goal was re-election.

Ohio's Favorite Son

Harding's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination grew out of his desire for re-election. Back in Ohio, in late 1919, Daugherty could see the old Bull Moose Republican faction gathering behind the presidential candidacy of Leonard Wood. If Wood should sweep the Ohio primary, his supporters might get control of the state organization and deny Harding's renomination. As a countermove, Daughtery counseled a favorite son presidential candidacy. This would head off the Wood people, strengthen Harding's position in Ohio, and give him control of the delegation to the Republican convention. At the proper time it would be easy to withdraw gracefully and take the senatorial nomination again. Harding agreed with some reluctance, for he was not a devious man, and he felt a vague impropriety in such tactics. He announced his candidacy and began making speeches in Ohio and a few other states where friends arranged opportunities.

Harding was encouraged by his friends in Ohio, some of his colleagues in the Senate, and a few others who had been favorably impressed by his Senate record and brief appearance at the 1916 convention. However, his candidacy attracted little nationwide support; most observers saw it as a gambit in his senatorial candidacy, or as a possible bid for the Vice Presidency, but nothing more.[2]

Daugherty, however, thought it could amount to a great deal more. Taking care not to alarm Harding or the other candidates, he opened a modest campaign headquarters in Washington and traveled around the country making political contacts. To skeptics who inquired how he thought Harding could possibly be nominated, he had a standard answer, usually given in a jocular fashion. He would admit that Harding would not be a preconvention favorite, but he doubted that any of the leaders could be nominated. When this became clear, the ranking men of the party would "get together in some hotel room about 2:11 in the morning" and surrender to the logic of the case for Harding, a man who would be acceptable to all.

In pursuance of this strategy, openly announced but in such a way as to ensure its being discounted, Daugherty did not have his candidate seriously challenge the other candidates in their home states and strongholds. Instead, he cultivated their delegate followings for promises to Harding as second or third choice. In the Ohio primary, Harding won 39 out of 48 delegates, which was considered only a modest success; Daugherty himself was defeated as a candidate for convention delegate. As convention time approached, and there was no evidence of great enthusiasm, Harding became restless and wanted to withdraw and file for the Senate. With considerable difficulty, Daugherty persuaded him that he actually had a chance for the nomination and that he ought to see it through.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-39. In its earliest phases the Harding candidacy did have a certain tenuous logic about it, which Mark Sullivan and other commentators noted but soon forgot. Sullivan later claimed that in March 1920 he had filed a dispatch from Washington in which he had reasoned that resentment at Wilson's treatment of Congress, the presence in the Senate of a large proportion of the effective Republican leaders, and the deep antagonisms between the leading candidates and their managers all suggested the need for a compromise candidate who would be acceptable to the Senate. Of those being mentioned, the attractive first-term senator from Ohio came closest to meeting all the requirements. Mark Sullivan, "The President and the Senate," *The World's Work*, Vol. 41 (April 1921), p. 309.

ACES AND EIGHTS

As the convention opened in Chicago, General Wood was in the lead, after a hard-fought campaign that had left deep factional wounds in many states where his Bull Moose supporters had challenged regular Republicans. Close behind was Governor Lowden, who for the moment had the support of most organization men in states where there were no favorite sons. After an aggressive preconvention campaign that had won him many primary votes but relatively few convention delegates, Hiram Johnson was far behind the leaders. The Johnson candidacy, however, had had some important results: by publicizing the large amount of money that was being spent, sometimes carelessly, by the Lowden and Wood managers, Johnson had taken the gloss off those candidates, antagonized their supporters, and made it impossible for him to join forces with either of them. The Harding candidacy had not prospered: on the convention's first ballot he was well back among the favorite sons, with only 65½ votes.

In four ballots neither Wood nor Lowden could muster a majority. The convention adjourned overnight, and the party leaders began casting about for a way of averting a tight deadlock.

That night occurred one of the famous caucuses of American politics —a meeting of Republican leaders, mostly from the Senate, in the suite of Wilson's original sponsor, Colonel George Harvey, who was now working the Republican camp. For several hours the inner circle of conservative Republicans consulted candidates and their managers and discussed compromises. Harry Daugherty was not there, but his candidate was considered. There was little enthusiasm for Harding, but in the end he seemed the highest common denominator, a candidate possibly acceptable to almost everyone. Harding was summoned and asked, according to Colonel Harvey's story, if he could say, on his conscience and before God, that there was nothing in his past that might embarrass the party or make him an unsuitable candidate. (In political circles there were rumors that Harding was having an extramarital affair and that he was part Negro.) After thinking it over for ten minutes, Harding told his questioners that there was nothing embarrassing in his background.[3]

By the next morning, the word from the midnight meeting had been

[3] Malcolm Moos, *The Republicans* (1956), pp. 316-17.

passed to all delegations: Let's try Harding. For four more ballots Lowden and Wood remained deadlocked, while Harding's total climbed steadily. Lowden and Wood met hastily to discuss the situation, but neither was willing to bow out in exchange for the second place. On the convention's ninth ballot Harding passed the leaders, and on the tenth he was nominated.

Late in the day, almost as an afterthought, the convention turned to the nomination of a Vice President. Senator Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin was proposed. Then the name of Calvin Coolidge touched off an apparently spontaneous demonstration on the floor and in the galleries. With all delegations jumping on the bandwagon, Coolidge was nominated on the first ballot.

The platform was a harmony project, largely engineered by the skillful, young national chairman, Will Hays. It attacked Wilson and favored woman suffrage, economy, administrative reorganization, the protective tariff, and collective bargaining. The prohibition question was dodged altogether. The great gulf separating Republicans on the League of Nations issue was bridged by a compromise plank prepared by Elihu Root. The plank denounced the treaty and the League as they then stood but suggested the possibility of affiliation with some sort of international organization. The world court was specifically endorsed.[4]

Historians apparently will speculate indefinitely about the 1920 Republican convention and the parts in the Harding nomination played by such figures as Daugherty, Colonel Harvey, Will Hays, and the various members of the Republican senatorial oligarchy. There have also been insinuations that money from oil interests, personified at the convention by one Jake Hamon of Oklahoma, played a major part in the nomination. Most interpretations have emphasized the "smoke-filled room" and described the nomination as an act of will, a choice by the old guard leaders among several candidates whose nomination might have been achieved with equal facility. But to the end of his days Harry Daugherty insisted that the famous conclave in the smoke-filled room did nothing more than read the signs already pointing unmistakably to Harding, and that the nomination would have occurred in any case. Harding's own comment was as apt as any: "I feel like a man who goes in with a pair of eights and comes out with aces full."[5]

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24; Eugene H. Roseboom, *A History of Presidential Elections* (1957), p. 393.

[5] Quoted by Moos, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1920

During the events leading to the nomination of Harding, the prospects of the Democrats continued to decline. President Wilson was well enough to see members of his cabinet occasionally, but he made no public appearances. On the issues of the day he steadfastly refused to compromise. Buffeted by a hostile congressional majority and torn by internal quarrels, the administration continued to drift.

Possibly nursing hopes of a renomination himself, Wilson called for an open convention and refused to select a successor. Meeting in San Francisco, the Democrats rejected William Gibbs McAdoo and A. Mitchell Palmer, both identified with the administration, and nominated an "outsider," James M. Cox, a Dayton publisher who had served three terms as governor of Ohio. Ambitious young Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had served the two Wilson administrations as Assistant Secretary of the Navy and was "right" in terms of both name and home state, became the vice presidential nominee.

Cox and Roosevelt made a vigorous campaign throughout the country, standing on the Democratic record and endorsing Wilson's position on the League of Nations.

Harding, by contrast, did most of his campaigning from his front porch in Marion, in deliberate emulation of McKinley whom he greatly admired. The strategy was heartily endorsed by Will Hays, who continued as national chairman with headquarters in New York City. Harry Daugherty functioned as Harding's personal manager at a secondary headquarters in Marion. The setting in Marion was fully appropriate to the principal Republican campaign theme of "Americanism." Republican orators made bitter attacks on the Wilson administration, while their genial candidate dispensed capsule sermons on work, religion, and the virtues of American (especially small town) life. He offered, he said, "not nostrums but normalcy." The Republicans also published a great deal of material on Harding's background, illustrated with pictures of him and his family, in an indirect effort to counteract fugitive literature (strongly condemned in private by official Democratic sources) claiming that Harding had Negro ancestry.[6]

On one issue, the League of Nations, the Republicans threatened to split. Harding was caught between the irreconcilables, like Senators

[6] Roseboom, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-02.

William E. Borah and Hiram Johnson, and such leaders as former President Taft, Hughes, Root, Hoover, and Nicholas Murray Butler, who formed a Committee of Thirty One Republicans to endorse Harding *and* the League. Harding wobbled from one side to the other without explicitly committing himself. Finally he came out with a vague proposal, drawn up in part by Colonel Harvey, for a world court and an association of nations with unspecified but limited powers. This left advocates on both sides of the League issue unsatisfied, but the straddle seemed acceptable to most voters, tired and confused by long months of controversy over the subject.[7]

From the perplexities of the outside world, the voters turned with relief to the familiar comfort of the front porch. Harding received 60 per cent of the popular vote and carried every state outside the South for an electoral vote landslide, 404 to 127. The Republicans also won several gubernatorial offices previously held by Democrats and increased their majority in Congress. The Democrats' plight on the morning after election when they found themselves locked out of their national headquarters in New York City, allegedly for nonpayment of rent, symbolized the low state of the party's fortunes.[8]

AFTERMATH OF ELECTION

Aching from a multiplicity of economic and social dislocations, the nation settled down to four dismal months of waiting for the new administration and the promised normalcy. Farm prices had fallen sharply, leading to foreclosures and business failures in western states. In some industries there were major layoffs. Despite a general loss of buying power, prices in general were slow in coming down, as management and labor argued whether prices or wages should be cut first and merchants tried to dispose of high-cost inventories. In a few commodities, such as coal, there were scarcities and profiteering. The administration's policy of holding taxes and revenues at high levels until accrued wartime obligations had been met became increasingly unpopular. So did its feeble attempts to keep the liquidation of the wartime civilian and military establishment gradual and orderly. The Red scare of the previous year continued, and to it were added a crime wave, a veterans problem, and a

[7] Moos, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-25.
[8] *New York Times* (Nov. 3, 1920).

growing uneasiness about prohibition enforcement. With respect to the latter, however, there was still some optimism: the New York police were promising a bone-dry city in six months.

Foreign nations waited anxiously to see what effect the election would have. At Geneva, delegates gathered for the first plenary session of the League, with expressions of hope that the United States, somehow, could yet participate. In the League commissions on mandates and reparations, the discussions were getting acrimonious, as the Allies quarreled over territories and Germany protested its inability to pay. In Russia, Ireland, Haiti, and elsewhere, there was strife and unrest. Only from Mexico, where the recent election of General Obregón to the presidency raised hopes for domestic calm and resumption of normal diplomatic relations, did the news seem favorable.

Silence in Washington

President Wilson, although he apparently had expected Cox to win, took the Democratic defeat stoically. The White House spokesman declined to comment on the election results, and it was noted that no post-election messages were sent to either Harding or Cox. Later in election week, as if to emphasize his unvanquished spirit, the still feeble President gave the public its first glimpse of him in over a year, as he took the fresh air on the White House portico.[9] At the first cabinet meeting after the election, someone remarked that it would "put Mr. Harding and the Republican party in a hole" if Wilson should send the rejected treaty back to the Senate with a demand for its reconsideration in the forthcoming lame duck session. Showing a flash of spirit, Wilson quickly rejected the suggestion, with the observation that his only desire was to help Mr. Harding.[10]

"Responsible government means government by those whom the people trust, and trust at the time of decision and action." This was the theme of a letter Wilson had written to his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, in 1916 on the eve of the presidential election he rather expected to lose. Wilson had speculated:

> What would it be my duty to do were Mr. Hughes to be elected? Four months would lapse before he could take charge of the affairs of the gov-

[9] *Ibid.* (Nov. 4, 5, 1920).

[10] David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet, 1913-1920*, Vol. 2 (1926), pp. 94-95.

> ernment, and during those four months I would be without such moral backing from the nation as would be necessary to steady and control our relations with other governments. I would be known to be the rejected, not the accredited, spokesman of the country; and yet the accredited spokesman would be without legal authority to speak for the nation. The direction of the foreign policy of the government would in effect have been taken out of my hands and yet its new definition would be impossible until March.

Wilson had a plan for getting around the constitutional difficulty; he would invite Hughes to become Secretary of State with the understanding that the President and Vice President would both then resign, thus making Hughes President immediately by the provisions of the presidential succession act.[11]

The solution that had not been needed in 1916 might have been used now, but apparently Wilson did not think it necessary. At any rate he made no move to resign, despite some public suggestions from the now disillusioned William Jennings Bryan that he ought to do so.[12] In 1920, of course, Wilson was not himself a candidate and was thus not technically rejected, despite his "solemn referendum" statement and the fact that the Republican campaign had been directed more against him than against Cox. Perhaps he considered that the situation came under his 1916 reservation that "in ordinary times it would perhaps not be necessary" to pursue such a drastic course.[13] At any rate he took no immediate initiative to ease the transition between administrations, nor apparently did he encourage others to do so. The only overt recognition the administration gave the President-elect was a telegram from the Secretary of the Navy offering Harding the use of a ship for the trip to Panama he was reported to be planning. The offer was politely rejected.[14]

Jubilation in Marion

Harding received the election news at his home in Marion on his 55th birthday, surrounded by his family, many personal and political friends,

[11] Wilson's letter to Lansing, Nov. 5, 1916, is quoted in full in Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters,* Vol. IV (1931), pp. 292-93. (Cited hereafter as Baker, *Wilson.*) Col. House, among others, urged this course on Wilson. Charles Seymour, ed., *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House,* Vol. 2 (1926), pp. 378-80.

[12] *New York Times* (Nov. 5, 1920). Bryan did not specifically refer to Wilson's intention in 1916; it is not certain that he knew of it.

[13] Baker, *Wilson, VI,* p. 293.

[14] *New York Times* (Nov. 6, 1920).

the sizable staff that had accumulated at Marion during the campaign, and a crowd of reporters. He spent the next three days responding to congratulatory messages, attending civil celebrations in his honor, and making final arrangements for a vacation that had been partially planned in advance. Announcing that no decisions would be made about the cabinet or other important matters until his return, President-elect and Mrs. Harding left on November 6 for Texas, on the first leg of a four-week vacation trip.

CHAPTER 12

PRESIDENT-ELECT HARDING

What kind of man was Warren G. Harding? Since the personal and political scandals that were exposed shortly after his death, Harding has had few defenders. Most historians have emphasized his weakness, mediocrity, and essential unfitness for the high office into which he was thrust by fortuitous events and the activities of others. An effort to see Harding as his contemporaries saw him does not change the broad outlines of this picture, but it softens a number of the harsh details.[1]

A MODEST MAN WITH MODEST AIMS

While Harding seemed at first glance to have been cast in a heroic mold, it was difficult even for his political managers to pretend that he

[1] There is no thorough and balanced biography of Harding. Willis F. Johnson's, *The Life of Warren G. Harding* (1923), apparently written in haste after Harding's death, deals extremely generously with its subject. By contrast, a racy, debunking, and largely undocumented treatment is Samuel Hopkins Adams, *Incredible Era: The Life and Times of Warren Gamaliel Harding* (1939). Harold F. Alderfer, "The Personality and Politics of Warren G. Harding" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1928), is also critical. Mark Sullivan in *Our Times,* Vol. 6 (1935), treats Harding sympathetically but not uncritically. Other journalists and commentators who saw Harding first hand, such as William Allen White and Walter Lippmann, have discussed him in various writings. Since Harding's death, his personal and presidential papers have been in custody of a trust controlled by his friends and relatives in Ohio and completely unavailable to historians. One attempt to write a thorough and sympathetic biography of Harding was given up after several years, apparently because access to essential materials could not be secured; miscellaneous materials and manuscript accumulated in this project have been deposited as the Ray Baker Harris collection of materials relating to Warren G. Harding in the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress also has a small collection of Harding papers from other sources.

was a man of outstanding ability. Not only was his formal education limited, but he showed no signs of wide reading or intellectual curiosity. As a senator he had acquired a passing acquaintance with national affairs, but he displayed no special insight into the great issues of his time. On most political matters, he took his cues from others and went along with his party. He had been a reasonably successful small business man, but he had never held political executive office. In his associates, he inspired affection but no particular respect. While Harding's political record was unmarred by scandal or any evidence of corruption, his personal life reflected, as Samuel Hopkins Adams said, many of "the instincts and habits of a corner sport," although this aspect of his character was well guarded from the public at large.

Despite his limitations, Harding had some important political assets. Besides looking like a President, he had a public manner nicely balanced between dignity and friendliness. In private he was easygoing and approachable. His loyalty to his friends was already well known. He was gracious in victory and genuinely modest. His rapid ascent to presidential heights seemed to have sharpened his sense of responsibility and awakened long-dormant religious feelings, which he felt compelled to express in public. The personality of the President-elect was in sharp contrast to the austere, unapproachable Wilson. Harding, an Ohio newspaper said proudly, was "just folks." Assisted by some skillful publicity work on the part of his managers, the American people seemed to understand and to love him. Few Presidents have had greater personal popularity and fewer real enemies than Harding.

Harding had a reasonable command of the rudiments of political skill. From twenty-five years of experience, he knew how things were done in local, state, and national politics. In fact, like old professionals in many fields, he tended to revere the conventions and rules of the game. In ordinary circumstances he knew how to get along without making unnecessary trouble for himself and was not likely to commit blunders from sheer inexperience.

In his years in politics and the newspaper business, Harding also had gained a nominal facility with words. He could write an editorial or deliver a passable political speech. At campaign time he liked to get out on the stump and "bloviate," to use a word he apparently coined himself. He was, however, limited in both style and content, usually expressing his conservative views in copybook maxims. His formal speeches, McAdoo said, "left the impression of an army of pompous

phrases moving over the landscape in search of an idea." On informal occasions, such as front porch appearances, he spoke with a clumsy sincerity that was sometimes quite effective.

In justice to Harding, it must be said that he approached the Presidency with a view of his political mission that was not unreasonable, given his own abilities and the needs of his time as he understood them. To Wilson, the essence of political art had been leadership. To Harding, it was compromise.

In 1920 it was obvious that the country was in an abnormal state, and the clash of acrid personalities had left a bitter pall over American politics. Very well, Harding would put things back in balance and preside over a regime of harmonious moderation. Had Wilson and his administration encroached on the functions of Congress? Harding would accord Congress its rightful place under the Constitution. Had Wilson insisted on dominating all the policies of his administration? Harding would listen to the counsel of the wise men he would appoint to the cabinet. Had Wilson ridden rough-shod over other leaders of his party? Harding would mediate and find common ground among all interests and factions. Were Wilson and his leading opponents all contentious and vindictive? Harding would speak well of all men and deal generously with both friend and foe. Was the nation weary of Wilson's insistent calls to greatness? Harding would serve the people instead of lecturing them about their duty. Was the nation troubled over finding its appropriate place in the world? Harding would restore confidence in traditional American values, and things would work themselves out. The nation, Harding felt, was overwrought by great events and dynamic leadership. Now it needed a patient man with the common touch who could restore "normalcy," heal political wounds, and usher in a new era of good feeling.

Reasonable as this approach might seem, there was still the problem of deciding what to do in specific circumstances. Walter Lippmann was remarkably foresighted about the dangers inherent in Harding's method of political leadership:

> For if Mr. Harding is to be somebody, and not merely the junction point where all the political collisions occur, he will have to become a real person by the only method open to a man of his intellectual habits. He cannot go up to a mountain top and see the world. He cannot go into solitude and find the truth. He cannot study a pile of papers and arrive at a policy. He must converse with somebody he trusts—that is the way of

his life. And that is a good way if he knows whom to trust, but the worst way possible if he does not.[2]

AN INTERLUDE OF RELAXATION

It was typical of the gregarious Harding to assemble a large party rather than seek solitude on his post-election vacation. On his special train were the key members of his staff: the ubiquitous Harry Daugherty; George B. Christian, Jr., a native of Marion who had served for several years as Harding's secretary; Dr. Charles E. Sawyer, also of Marion, his family physician; and Judson Welliver, a Washington newspaperman serving as the President-elect's personal publicity man. The party also included several personal guests of the President-elect, the most prominent being his favorite golfing companions: Senators Davis Elkins of West Virginia, Frederick Hale of Maine, and J. S. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, and Edward B. McLean, owner of the *Washington Post*.[3]

Work and Play in Texas

The Harding train rolled across the Midwest with occasional pauses for rear-platform appearances by the President-elect. There was a longer stop in Oklahoma for a victory party given by Jake Hamon, the oil man who had been active for Harding at the Chicago convention.[4] On November 8, the Harding party arrived at Point Isabel, a village on the Gulf of Mexico near Brownsville, Texas. The next several days were devoted mainly to fishing, hunting, and golf at a nearby course. Although it was not publicly reported at the time, it was later recalled by members of the party that in spite of strenuous efforts, Harding had difficulty

[2] Walter Lippmann, "Hail and Farewell," *Vanity Fair* (April 1921), p. 30.

[3] According to one contemporary story, when Senator and former Secretary of State Philander C. Knox saw the guest list he snorted that Harding must, indeed, be seeking complete mental relaxation. Clinton W. Gilbert, *The Mirrors of Washington* (1921), p. 7.

[4] Hamon's name returned to the news several days after Harding's visit when he was fatally shot by his mistress. Reports of the woman's flight to Mexico, apprehension, trial, and eventual acquittal gave extra flavor to the news during the next few weeks. The connection with Harding, needless to say, was not overlooked.

sustaining a mood of celebration. He was suffering a let-down and often seemed preoccupied and depressed as he contemplated the future.[5]

If his future problems were not already fully apparent to Harding, he had only to examine the daily newspapers, which made up for the lack of current news during his vacation with column after column on the difficulties he would face when he returned. The diverse views of Republican leaders on the League issue were reported in detail. The personal rivalries and factional cleavages that would complicate cabinet-making were examined with relish. Plans for administrative reorganization, for installing a budget system, and for reclassifying federal employees were discussed. Demands for lower taxes and a protective tariff were reported. Even the old Panama Canal tolls issue was exhumed.

Whatever else might be required, the first step was obvious. From Brownsville, Harding sent letters to the ranking Republican leaders inviting them to confer with him on his return to Marion. Externally at least, a familiar pattern of transition activity was beginning again.

The city of Brownsville prevailed on its eminent guest to make an Armistice Day address. His principal contribution was a reinterpretation of the recent war: It had not been, as some would believe, for world-saving, idealistic purposes; the war had meaning only as a struggle for the preservation of American sovereign rights. Harding also spoke of the importance of military preparedness, a strong navy and the merchant marine.

So soon, Harding found the practical problems of foreign policy bearing in on him. He managed, after some confusion, to side step what might have been a premature involvement. At this time the President-elect of Mexico, General Alvaro Obregón, was making an informal pre-inaugural visit to the United States. Since the rise of Obregón seemed to promise peace south of the Rio Grande and open the way for resumption of normal diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico, it was widely suggested in the press—and apparently desired by the Mexicans—that Harding and Obregón should meet for a conference. From his train on the way to Brownsville, Harding let it be known that he did not look favorably on the suggestion.[6] Nevertheless, an inference was

[5] Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes*, Vol. 1 (1951), p. 405.

[6] It was "understood" by the press that Harding felt that ". . . his position, even as President-elect, does not warrant plunging into a situation that may be complicated before his inauguration and that might have to be dealt with by the present Administration." *New York Times* (Nov. 8, 1920).

drawn in some quarters that Harding might be induced to visit Mexico on his way to Panama, or even to attend Obregón's inauguration on December 1. A representative of Obregón arrived in Brownsville to press the invitation. Senator Albert B. Fall of New Mexico, generally considered the Senate's expert on Mexican affairs, arrived almost simultaneously. Shortly, it was announced that Harding's schedule would not, unfortunately, permit such a visit.[7]

A Restful Cruise

Harding left Brownsville for New Orleans on November 17 and arrived the following day. He made a short speech from the steps of the city hall, stressing the values of hard work, commerce, and Americanism. That evening the group, minus Harry Daugherty who had business elsewhere, sailed for Panama.

The cruise was peaceful, and Harding got his first extended rest since the election. On November 23 he arrived in Panama, where he insisted on his status as a private rather than official visitor. Most of his time was spent in sightseeing and social activity, although he did tour the canal defenses and have conversations with the principal American officials stationed there. He also had talks with Panamanian government leaders, who pressed on him their version of a current border dispute with Costa Rica.

Harding left Panama on November 28 and, after touching briefly at Jamaica, arrived at Newport News on December 4. Daugherty, who had meanwhile been to Ohio, New York, and Washington, stirring up speculation about the cabinet everywhere he went, was waiting at the dock.

Harding spent a day visiting Army and Navy installations in the Norfolk area, where he pleased his hosts by reiterating his belief in a big navy and merchant marine. He also spoke of the possibility of making available to private enterprise the cargo ships built by the government during the war. The next day he delivered a message on brotherhood at the National Elks Home at Bedford, Virginia. He arrived in Washington just in time for the opening of the second session of the Sixty-sixth Congress, of which he was still a member.

[7] *New York World* (Nov. 17 and 19, 1920).

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

As Harding took his place on the floor of the Senate, he received a rousing ovation from his colleagues and from the galleries, packed for the occasion. As soon as the Senate was called to order, the President-elect was recognized for a brief farewell speech. Harding spoke emotionally of the Senate as a great legislative body, of his pride at having been a member, and of his reluctance to leave. Although he was still a member, he thought propriety forbade his making any specific suggestions about the current session. Noting that three months of the Wilson administration remained, he hoped that the Senate and House would join in making them fruitful rather than wasted months. Harding emphasized his future need for cooperation with the senators, on both sides of the aisle, and noted that from his membership he had become, "particularly sensible of the obligations of the Senate." But he dismissed as "highly imaginative and harmless fiction" the stories he had been hearing about the Senate oligarchy. In the future, he said: ". . . I shall be just as mindful of the Senate's responsibilities as I have been jealous of them as a member; but I mean at the same time to be just as insistent about the responsibilities of the executive. Our governmental good fortune does not lie in any surrender at either end of the Avenue."[8]

After his speech, Harding left the Senate chamber and held a press conference. His principal announcement was to confirm the impression that he intended to call a special session of Congress after inauguration. He hoped that meanwhile Congress might pass a bill providing for an executive budget, start hearings on tariff revision, and get all the appropriation bills for the forthcoming fiscal year out of the way. He promised "an early effort to straighten out our foreign relations." Later in the day and most of the following day, Harding conferred with members of Congress and other Republican leaders. Harry Daugherty, former Senator John W. Weeks of Massachusetts, and Senator Fall were prominent in the Harding entourage and appeared to be interviewing other leaders on his behalf. It was announced that Harding would not, for the time being, resign from the Senate but would remain a standing pair with Senator Underwood, who also would be away for most of the session.[9]

[8] *New York Times* (Dec. 7, 1920).
[9] *Ibid.*

Harding's visit to Washington was, to all appearances, a great success. The sincerity of his speech to the Senate, the low level of partisanship in all of his remarks, and the general modesty of his conduct received much favorable comment in the press. Yet, for all his modesty, he had acted with reassuring confidence. He had been properly deferential to the Senate, but he had scoffed at rumors that he would be the tool of a Senate clique and had served notice that he intended to uphold the responsibilities of the executive branch. While specifically denying the propriety of his telling Congress what it should do, he had made it reasonably clear what he hoped it would do. He had pursued a course to which no one could take exception but had cautiously preserved his independence. "By the time the day ended, Harding had managed to convey to his Senatorial friends something that gave them a most disquieting apprehension of that quality which is called firmness if it is on your side, or stubbornness if it interferes with your projects."[10]

PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT

Harding's visit to Washington also produced nothing in the way of cooperative action by the President and the President-elect to ease the transition between administrations. Several days before Harding's arrival, there were newspaper reports of the probability of a meeting between Harding and Wilson.[11] Other reports denied the story, indicating that the White House attitude was that Harding would be welcome if he chose to call on the President but that the first move would be up to him.[12] Whether it had any foundation or not, the story was kept alive for three days.[13] However, it was quashed promptly on Harding's arrival

[10] Mark Sullivan, "The President and the Senate," *The World's Work*, Vol. 41 (April 1921), p. 616. *Cf.* Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 7, 1920).

[11] One reporter went so far as to assert that:

"Information that President Wilson would be pleased to have a long talk with President-elect Harding has been conveyed to the latter and it is considered likely in high official circles that these two men will meet at the White House shortly after the Senator's return.

"It became known yesterday that President Wilson's expressed desire for such a conference was made known to the Senator in an indirect manner a few days ago, and that in the same manner the President-elect has signified a willingness to accept the invitation. . . ." Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 2, 1920). *Cf. New York World* (Dec. 3, 1920).

[12] *New York Times* (Dec. 3, 1920).

[13] *E.g.*, see by-line story by David Lawrence in the Washington *Evening Star* (Dec.

back in the country. Reports from the Harding party were that no such invitation had been received from Wilson, and Harding felt that it would not be proper for him to seek a conference with the President.[14]

The confusion may have arisen over the fact that a message was sent from Mrs. Wilson to Mrs. Harding, inviting the future First Lady to come for tea and inspect the White House and meet the household staff during her visit to Washington. Mrs. Harding spent an hour and a half at the White House on December 7 during which, it was reported, she was shown "everything but the kitchen and the President."[15] However, the conversation between the two ladies, according to the recollections of White House staff members, was a notably stiff one.[16]

This meeting on the distaff side was the only contact between the incoming and outgoing occupants of the White House. On his way to the railroad station, as he left the city, Harding drove to the White House and left his card as a token of a formal call, but he did not even step from his automobile.

4, 1920). Although it was not signed, the original *Star* report on December 2 may well have come from Lawrence, who devoted several columns about that time to the problems of orderly transfer of power to the new administration. On November 16, for example, Lawrence had pointed out the desirability of having the new cabinet members named as early as possible and studying the problems of their departments under the guidance of their predecessors well in advance of inauguration. Washington *Evening Star* (Nov. 16, 1920).

[14] *New York World* (Dec. 5, 1920); *New York Times* (Dec. 6, 1920).

[15] *New York World* (Dec. 7, 1920).

[16] The incident is described in the memoirs of Mrs. Jaffray, the chief housekeeper who had been handed on from the Tafts to the Wilsons. On being introduced to Mrs. Harding, Mrs. Jaffray was promptly told that she would not be needed after March 4; Mrs. Harding later changed her mind and retained the housekeeper. Elizabeth Jaffray, *Secrets of the White House* (1927), pp. 77-80.

CHAPTER 13

THE BEST MINDS

Rested by his ocean cruise and warmed by his reception in Washington, Harding returned to Marion on December 9 to begin his serious preparations for the Presidency. During the campaign he had promised that if he were elected, "the best minds of the country" would be put to work on the nation's problems. Somehow the phrase had stuck in the public consciousness, and for the next five weeks the press chronicled in detail the comings and goings of the Best Minds who appeared in Marion for conferences with the President-elect. For the most part, of course, the Best Minds turned out to be in the possession of ranking Republican politicians, although a few disaffected Democrats and nonpolitical national figures were received.

In outward form, the activities at Marion resembled the procession of Democratic leaders to Trenton during Wilson's preparatory period, but there were important differences that foreshadowed much of the ethos of the Harding administration. At Trenton, it had been apparent to all that Wilson was personally and firmly in charge. He knew on what points he wanted advice and on what points he did not. He matched wits with the keenest of his visitors and looked over the others. He was interested in what the party wanted, but that was only one more piece of information to be taken into account as he planned for goals that were in his own mind but seldom shared with others.

By contrast, Marion was an exercise in group thinking. Victorious after eight years of resisting Wilson's leadership, the Republicans had promised the country—and themselves—an administration free of execu-

tive domination, with decisions based on party consensus. The President-elect fitted nicely into the pattern: he was from the Senate; his views on policy were not rigidly fixed; and he frequently declared his desire to be his party's instrument. Now the problem was to find out what the party wanted. The picture of Harding as a man completely lacking a will of his own has often been overdrawn; on a number of points, he did know approximately what he wanted. But he was so thoroughly committed to the role of the accommodating and conciliating leader that even on matters lying close to presidential interest, he felt that he must seek the approval of the party elders. And on matters of policy where Congress might be involved, Harding's purpose was to seek the views of the experts and legislative leaders and blend them into a party program. Any program so reasonably developed, he thought, would certainly have widespread support.

In addition to the collective decision process, there were important differences in the atmosphere that distinguished Marion from Trenton eight years before. The activities at Trenton had taken their tone from the formality of the State House setting, Wilson's austere public personality, his insistence on keeping his own counsel and strong hints to his visitors that they do likewise, and his general insistence on order and regularity in the affairs of the office and its dealings with the public and the press.

Marion was more like a political picnic. Almost all of the visitors at least knew Harding, and many of them were old friends. They found him surrounded by relatives and home-town friends; by several lieutenants and advisers, plus a sizable clerical staff; by miscellaneous Ohio political hangers-on; and by a crowd of reporters, many of whom had been covering Harding for almost six months and were by now part of the family. The activity centered in Harding's comfortable frame house and overflowed across the lawn to George Christian's house next door, which had been converted to temporary offices, and spread throughout the friendly small town. The atmosphere was convivial, saturated with rumors and gossip. Most visitors talked freely of what they had told the President-elect and what he had told them. If the state of Harding's thinking could not be ascertained from secondary reports, he was, himself, usually available to reporters, although not always willing to be quoted. Ex-professor Wilson had conducted his conferences like tutorial sessions; Harding's conferences were like congressional hearings—execu-

tive sessions, perhaps, but with frequent briefings and leaks from the committee room.

PROBLEMS OF FOREIGN POLICY

The conferences at Marion started at a high level. The first priority, it was declared, was to decide what position the new administration would take on the supreme policy question of the day—the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations. Republican opinion ranged from the irreconcilables, who wanted to declare the war with Germany formally at an end by joint resolution of Congress and to stay out of all formal settlements and continuing obligations, to the internationalists, who urged a new effort to ratify the treaty and join the League with a minimum of reservations. The press had been pounding at Harding ever since his nomination in an effort to get some clarification of his views.

Conflicting Advice

Befitting the importance of this issue, the first visitors to Marion were among the most eminent and distinguished Republican leaders. On December 10, Harding opened his conferences by receiving Charles Evans Hughes, the Republican candidate in 1916.[1] In the succeeding days Harding also saw such dignitaries as Elihu Root, Herbert Hoover, and Nicholas Murray Butler. While the four just mentioned were cautious in what they told reporters about their talks with Harding, all were identified with the internationalist wing of the party and presumably urged reconsideration of the treaty and the League.

Less restrained was another internationalist of a sort, Colonel Harvey, who advanced a substitute for the League which, he confidently said, "dwarfs all previous propositions" on the peace question. His proposal was that ". . . the United States should stand as a sponsor for an association of peoples who should pledge their respective Governments for all time never to engage in offensive warfare until the question had been submitted to, and decided by, the people themselves."[2] While Harding

[1] This was parallel to the Wilson conferences. Wilson's first important visitor had been his party's previous presidential candidate and presumably ranking figure, William Jennings Bryan.

[2] *New York Times* (Dec. 14, 1920).

did not comment publicly on the Harvey proposal, it seemed significant that Harvey remained in Marion as Harding's house guest for several days, distributing copies of his memorandum in the President-elect's outer office. William Jennings Bryan also came to Marion to confer with Harding and join him in addressing a local Presbyterian gathering. "Considering fundamentals," he said, "Senator Harding and I are just as close together politically as we are religiously."[3] Bryan endorsed the Harvey referendum plan by claiming it as his own. Actually, the idea had been well-worn by such progressives as Bryan, La Follette, and Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma.

As the December days passed, more of Harding's visitors seemed to be associated with the isolationist position: Senator Albert B. Fall; Senator Harry S. New of Indiana, one of Harding's closest friends; irreconcilable Democratic Senators James A. Reed of Missouri and James K. Shields of Tennessee.[4] Such advisers were outspoken in opposition to the League or anything like it and were equally scornful of the referendum idea, but they were far from agreed about steps to end the war and define America's relations with the rest of the world.

The state of Harding's mind on this problem seemed to depend on who had seen him most recently. Interspersed with journalistic reports of the daily readings on this barometer were miscellaneous rumors that Harding was appointing a special peace mission to Europe, that he would ask the League to draft a world law code to be observed as the conscience of each nation suggested, and that he would call the ambassadors of the European nations to a conference at the White House after inauguration to discuss alternatives to the League of Nations. In Washington, reporter David Lawrence complained:

> The folks who watch the fluctuations of the stock market from day to day have a "cinch" compared to the ambassadors and ministers who scrutinize the daily dispatches from Marion or who seek by the subtle process of social companionship to elicit from the many supposed intimates of the President-elect . . . a fragment of assurance as to the future.[5]

[3] *New York World* (Dec. 18, 1920).

[4] It was noted, however, that Harding's visitors did not include irreconcilables of the western progressive group, of which Senators Hiram Johnson and William Borah of Idaho were the most prominent. This was almost the only Republican faction Harding did not attempt to placate.

[5] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 23, 1920).

Compromise Fails

After two weeks of conferences, Harding issued a statement that was offered not as a precise program but rather as an outline of principles on which his foreign policies would be based. The principles were far from clear, but they seemed to include avoidance of the obligations inherent in the League; substitution of some sort of an association of nations that would wield the moral force of the world in behalf of peace; willingness to settle international questions through conferences and normal diplomatic intercourse, a favorable attitude toward the proposed world court, if it could be joined without obligation to the League; and an effort at mutual disarmament.[6]

Harding clearly hoped that this statement would relieve the pressure on the foreign policy subject. Ex-President Taft provided some comfort, when he stopped at Marion the following day and seemed to find the set of principles generally acceptable.[7] This was considered significant, since Taft had been one of the pro-League Committee of Thirty One. However, the controversy still continued. New York newspapers like the *Times* and the *World,* speaking for the eastern internationalists, editorialized that the new statement showed little progress beyond the vague statements in Harding's campaign speeches. On the other hand, the right wing of the party continued to oppose any kind of an association of nations scheme. Persistent reports that Hughes would be Secretary of State seemed to intensify the opposition. On December 30, Senator Knox conferred with Harding and afterward issued a statement that was interpreted by Mark Sullivan as "direct defiance" of Harding. Knox indicated his intention of reintroducing his bill for a joint resolution declaring the war ended by unilateral action, plus a declaration that the United States would "consult with other powers" in the event of a threat to the peace—the closest approach Knox would make to the association of nations idea.[8]

This seemed to end all attempts to achieve pre-inaugural unity among the Republicans on the League issue. It was soon reported:

> . . . the incoming administration, in harmonious agreement with Republican Senate leaders, has decided to defer action in the Association of

[6] *New York Times* (Dec. 23, 1920).
[7] *Ibid.* and *New York World* (Dec. 25, 1920).
[8] *New York Post* (Dec. 31, 1920).

> Nations proposed by President-elect Harding until the slate is clear of domestic matters. The clear indication is that the association plan will be sidetracked until the regular session of Congress next December. . . .
>
> Mr. Harding is said by his friends to be more concerned about domestic questions and the financial situation than is generally believed. The whole atmosphere in Marion has recently been domestic rather than international.[9]

The report was correct. Domestic questions, particularly the question of the cabinet, had become the most critical.

CABINET MAKING

During his visit to Washington, Harding persistently denied that he had done anything about the cabinet, and in his first two weeks back in Marion, he fended off questions on this subject by emphasizing his primary interest in clarifying a Republican position on the League issue. Admittedly, the cabinet was being discussed—he had a number of visitors who obviously had no connection with foreign policy—but the impression was given that Harding had not yet really come to grips with the cabinet problem.

This was a mild dissimulation. The cabinet had been in Harding's mind all along. There is evidence that even before election he had given some thought to it and discussed with one or two people the possibility of their entering the cabinet. Exactly when or by what process he reached decisions is unknown, but from all indications Harding had first choices in mind for several of the leading posts by the time he returned to Marion early in December.[10]

Harding's Objectives

Concerning the cabinet, Harding was well intentioned if not completely realistic. He was serious in his desire to bring into the cabinet men of real stature, feeling a need to make up for his own limitations

[9] *New York World* (Jan. 6, 1921).

[10] Daugherty was obviously the person closest to the process, although the fact that he was himself a leading prospect for one of the appointments must have made his role somewhat different, for example, from Colonel House's in the Wilson appointments. Daugherty's own account, although certainly not completely reliable, indicates that most of the original choices were Harding's own selections, some of them contrary to Daugherty's advice. Harry M. Daugherty (in collaboration with Thomas Dixon), *The Inside Story of the Harding Tragedy* (1932).

and to establish public confidence in the administration. He had in mind such figures as Charles Evans Hughes, whose bearded countenance was a veritable symbol of public virtue, and Herbert Hoover, whose well-publicized exploits as an engineer, humanitarian, and administrator had made him a national celebrity.

Being a man dedicated to compromise, it was natural for Harding to think of trying to unify his party by giving recognition to the leading factions. Harding carried this principle to an extreme. In the beginning he was seriously interested in bringing into the cabinet several of the recent candidates for the Republican nomination, including Lowden, Wood, and Nicholas Murray Butler. Hoover, too, had been an almost-candidate, and of course Coolidge was already taken care of by the Vice Presidency. (Of the major candidates, only Hiram Johnson received no consideration.) Such a combination of public figures and presidential also-rans would constitute a top cabinet group of recognized ability and high stature, leaning to the progressive side but broadly representative of the party, while avoiding commitment to the extremes. Below this blue ribbon group, posts could be assigned so as to satisfy the interest groups commonly accorded recognition, repay outstanding political obligations, provide suitable links with Congress, and give the President the one or two strictly personal choices he could hardly be denied.

Under cover of his foreign policy discussions, Harding proceeded with his first cabinet negotiations. With a little luck, he might have had the entire cabinet settled by early in January. This apparently was his hope and intention. However, he failed, both on the composition of the cabinet and on his timetable. The reasons were partly inherent in the political situation and partly due to tactical errors on Harding's part.

Several Best Minds

Hughes, who reported on December 10, was the first of the Best Minds to come to Marion. Since Harding still appeared to be quite uncertain about the course of his foreign policy, Hughes was somewhat taken aback when Harding invited him to become Secretary of State. Hughes returned immediately to New York to consult his law partners and wrote to Harding, on December 13, that he would be glad to serve if the President-elect still desired it.[11] Meanwhile the great Republican

[11] Letter, Charles Evans Hughes to Ray Baker Harris, April 3, 1934, in the Harris

debate on foreign policy continued. The newspapers speculated that if Harding ended up on the internationalist side, the Secretary of State would probably be either Hughes or Elihu Root; if he sided with the isolationists, the leading prospects were David Jayne Hill and Knox. There were also a few rumors that Harding intended to give this post to his friend Senator Fall.

On December 12, Herbert Hoover conferred with Harding at Marion. Even before election, according to Hoover's memoirs, Harding had told him that he wanted him in the cabinet. Aside from his recognized ability and great popularity with the general public—although not necessarily with the Republican party itself—Hoover had the advantage of versatility. He would be a plausible appointee for the departments of Interior, Commerce, Labor, or even Agriculture. As they conferred, Harding asked Hoover his preference as between the Interior and Commerce offices, and Hoover asked for the latter. Harding's intention seemed clear enough, but nothing was put in writing.[12]

It must have been obvious to Harding that appointing Hoover involved a considerable political risk. First of all, Hoover was anathema to Hiram Johnson, whose lasting enmity he had incurred by allowing his name to be entered in the California presidential primary against Johnson. While Harding was not disposed to pay a great deal of attention to Johnson, it was always dangerous to try to appoint a man whose confirmation was likely to be opposed by a Senator from his home state. The other problem was that as a progressive, an internationalist, a former member of the Wilson administration, and (it was suspected) a recent convert to Republicanism, Hoover was displeasing to party regulars of the right wing. If several of the old guard senators should support Johnson in a fight against Hoover's confirmation, the nomination would be in real trouble. However, Hoover was so popular that Harding apparently felt the political risk worth taking.

On December 15, Senator Fall, who had spent a great deal of time with Harding on the latter's vacation trip and visit to Washington, came to Marion to confer again with the President-elect. It is a reasonable presumption that Fall's entering the cabinet was discussed on this visit, if not earlier. With Hoover having declared for the Department of Com-

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Collection of Harding Papers, Library of Congress. Also Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes*, Vol. 1 (1951), pp. 405-06.

[12] Herbert Hoover. *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, Vol. 2 (1952), p. 36.

merce three days before, the way was clear for Harding to discuss the Interior Department, a logical assignment for a Senator with western residence and long-standing interests in Mexican affairs.

There is, however, some evidence that despite the offer to Hughes, which was understood by Hughes to be a firm one, Harding was still considering Fall—or at least someone other than Hughes—for the State portfolio. Nicholas Murray Butler later recorded that when he visited Harding on December 18, Harding suggested that Butler might have the State Department post by asking for it. When Butler demurred, Harding pressed him to take a top ambassadorship. Harding went on to say that the only alternative for Secretary of State seemed to be Fall. Butler, horrified, urged the appointment of Root; neither of them mentioned Hughes.[13] Other visitors to Marion at that particular time also noted that Harding was talking about Fall for Secretary of State but was getting little encouragement from his advisers.[14] At any rate, on December 22 Harding went a step further in committing himself to Hughes. In response to a December 13 letter from Hughes saying that he would be glad to serve, Harding wrote that Hughes should consider the matter settled.[15]

On December 20, Henry C. Wallace of Iowa, editor of *Wallace's Farmer* and a leading spokesman for agricultural interests, appeared in Marion for a conference with Harding. Wallace had advised on the Republican platform farm plank, produced campaign material on agricultural subjects, and was in all respects, including state of residence, available for Secretary of Agriculture. Soon after his visit to Marion, there were reports from reliable sources that he was, indeed, Harding's choice for the post.

[13] Nicholas Murray Butler, *Across the Busy Years,* (1939), Vol. 1, pp. 391-403.

[14] Mark Sullivan in *Our Times,* Vol. 6 (1935), pp. 145-47, has assembled considerable evidence that Harding's first impulse after election was to make Fall his Secretary of State but that the opposition of almost everyone he consulted soon caused him to abandon the idea. On the other hand, Daugherty, *op. cit.,* pp. 72-73, insists that Hughes was Harding's first choice from the beginning. A look at the chronology of events in Marion suggests an explanation of the apparent contradiction. The period from December 15-20 was one of the peaks in the battle between the pro-Leaguers and the isolationists for ascendancy on foreign policy. Rumors of the Hughes appointment had already begun to spread and were causing resentment in right-wing circles. It is the writer's belief that Harding was casting about for alternatives that might be more acceptable to the right wing, and in that connection was trying out Fall's name and even giving encouragement to Butler.

[15] Pusey, *op. cit.,* Vol. 1, pp. 405-06. So far as can be ascertained, this was the only cabinet offer that had any kind of status in writing until just before the announcements

Lowden, Dawes, and the Treasury

In the early speculation about the post of Secretary of the Treasury, the favorite among the pundits was the recent contender for the presidential nomination, Frank O. Lowden. The Illinois governor had been gracious as much of his convention support moved over to Harding.[16] His personal connections, business background, and political and administrative record made him eminently qualified. Harding was known to think highly of Lowden and to be determined *not* to give the Treasury post to Wall Street. Lowden himself apparently expected to be offered this job (or possibly the Agriculture post, which represented another of his interests) and was privately worrying whether to accept or to remain clear for another try for the nomination in 1924.

Harding was also interested in a friend of Lowden's who had similar availability factors of residence, factional connection, economic affiliation, and general sphere of competence. This was Charles G. Dawes, a Chicago banker long active in Republican politics. Dawes had served during the war as a temporary general in charge of purchasing in France for the A.E.F. He was especially interested in administrative reform and government economy; Harding was first attracted to an article by Dawes on "How a President Can Save A Billion Dollars." While Dawes was not so widely known as the former candidate Lowden, he had fewer enemies; Harding also probably found his bluff personality more congenial.

It was Dawes who received the first call to Marion, and when he appeared on December 20 he was offered the Treasury Department office.[17] Dawes apparently expressed some reluctance, both because he thought his friend Lowden should have first chance at an appointment (the requirements of "balance" probably precluded having both of them in the cabinet) and because he was not certain that the post was the right spot for his talents. He left Marion without saying yes but with the impres-

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were made. The remainder of the "offers" were apparently verbal inquiries as to availability in case the appointment should be offered.

[16] Although concerned about the senatorial clique that put itself behind the Harding candidacy, Lowden had refused at the critical moment to lend his support to Wood or to join any "stop Harding" movement. Lowden was on excellent personal terms with both Harding and Daugherty. William T. Hutchinson, *Lowden of Illinois,* Vol. 2 (1957), pp. 452-79, 486.

[17] Charles G. Dawes, *The First Year of the Budget of the United States* (1923), p. 1.

sion that the job was his if he wanted it. Others who saw Harding about that time got the impression that the appointment was practically certain, and it was so reported in the press.[18]

Some Political Rewards

By the last week in December, tentative decisions about three other cabinet posts had been reached. Despite Daugherty's low standing as a lawyer, Harding seemed determined to make him Attorney General.[19] By this time Will Hays, the energetic national party chairman, was almost certain of becoming Postmaster General.[20] John W. Weeks of Massachusetts was slated for Secretary of the Navy. Weeks was an Annapolis graduate and regular Navy officer before going into banking and politics in Boston. He had served in both houses of Congress and was considered unusually able. After defeat for re-election in 1918, he had spent much time in party organization work, and during the campaign of 1920 was one of the stalwarts with Hays at Republican headquarters in New York.

With Harding known to be interested in recognizing all party factions, General Leonard Wood was an obvious candidate for Secretary of War. Even before election, Harding had encouraged Wood to believe that he would be in the cabinet. Wood was known to be eager for the job, as a personal vindication after being sidetracked by the Wilson administration and for the opportunity to carry out long-frustrated plans for army reorganization and reform. Harding was known to be seriously considering the appointment, and in late December and early January prominent Republicans like Henry L. Stimson put heavy pressure on Harding in Wood's behalf.[21]

By the end of December, it appeared that presumptive choices had been made for all the cabinet posts except possibly the Department of Labor. There was considerable editorial speculation, not discouraged by the Harding camp, that early announcement would be made for some of

[18] *New York Times* (Dec. 24, 1920).

[19] Senator James Wadsworth of New York, who visited Harding on December 19, recalled that he, Senator New, and others tried hard but with no visible success to talk Harding out of the idea. Wadsworth to Ray Baker Harris, letter of June 20, 1938, Harris Collection of Harding Papers, Library of Congress.

[20] *New York Times* (Dec. 20, 1920). Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (1955), p. 270.

[21] Hermann Hagedorn, *Leonard Wood,* Vol. 2 (1931), pp. 375-77

the leading posts, such as the State and Treasury departments, to permit the designees to familiarize themselves with their duties in advance and perhaps to work with Republican leaders in the lame duck Congress.[22] On December 29 and 30, reporters around the Harding headquarters expected the announcements momentarily, but they did not come.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AT MARION

The foreign policy and cabinet discussions were the principal but by no means the only business at Marion in December and January. There was, of course, a heavy correspondence, averaging 400 to 500 letters a day. Daugherty, Welliver, Christian, and the clerical staff took care of most of this, but a certain amount inevitably had to be referred to the President-elect.[23]

Visitors also had to be greeted. In addition to the top-ranking leaders who attracted attention, almost every day there were several lesser-known state or local Republican leaders, not to mention emissaries of patriotic, fraternal, veterans, labor, farmer, business, and other groups. On December 15, for example, Harding greeted and read a prepared statement to a large delegation from the Child Conservation League; his visitors were pleased that he endorsed the idea of creating a federal department of public welfare.[24]

On December 16, Vice-President-elect and Mrs. Coolidge spent most of the day in Marion. It was reported that Coolidge and Harding talked about the cabinet appointments and that Coolidge, with some reluctance, agreed to Harding's request that he sit regularly in the cabinet and take part in the councils of the administration.[25] This seemed, in 1920, a considerable departure from precedent, but the recent awkward situation when Vice-President Marshall had been unwilling or unable to assume responsibility during Wilson's serious illness had renewed interest in making something useful of the Vice-Presidency.

Much of the activity at Marion obviously had to do with patronage,

[22] *New York Times* (Dec. 27, 1920).

[23] One newspaper report suggests that as the pressure of conflicting counsel on cabinet appointments and other matters built up, Harding sought refuge by working compulsively on what was, after all, fairly trivial correspondence. Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 5, 1921).

[24] *New York Times* (Dec. 16, 1920).

[25] *New York Post* (Dec. 18, 1920).

which seemed the special province of Mr. Daugherty. As the President-elect's "personal representative," Daugherty conferred with visitors and dashed back and forth on confidential errands to Columbus, Philadelphia, Washington, and New York. Cornered by reporters after a consultation with Hays and the New York state leaders, he admitted he had been discussing appointments. He said:

> I favor putting the responsibility for the dispensing of patronage squarely on the organizations. Let the organizations be held strictly accountable for their endorsements. After the appointment is made the appointee ought to fit the job, so that the appointing power can rest assured that the work entrusted to him will be done right.[26]

In returning to Marion, Harding had made it clear that he did not intend to take an active leadership role in the lame duck session of Congress. However, he did not ignore legislative matters completely. Representatives and senators occasionally came to Marion to keep him in touch with developments and confer on pending matters. For example, the House Republican floor leader and the Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee came to discuss a probable drastic cut in the Army estimates; the Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee came to discuss naval disarmament; and Senator Reed Smoot of Utah appeared to talk to Harding about tax reduction and government economy.

The details of Harding's resignation from the Senate had to be worked out. It was first stated that Harding would have to hold his seat until at least mid-January, when Ohio would get a Republican governor. Otherwise his late opponent, Cox, would appoint a Democrat to fill the temporary vacancy during the remainder of the congressional session. When this was reported, Cox quickly offered to appoint Frank B. Willis, the Republican senator-elect who would get the seat in March anyway. Harding was apparently disposed to take advantage of the offer, but Willis, for personal reasons, was not ready to take the seat immediately. Harding's resignation was submitted on January 9, to be effective on the 13th. Cox went out of office on the 10th and his successor promptly appointed Willis, who was sworn in on the 14th.[27]

[26] When shown Daugherty's statement, "George A. Glynn, Chairman of the Republican State Committee, grunted with satisfaction. 'That's the Stuff,' he said. 'President-elect Harding will not go very far wrong if he follows the advice of Mr. Daugherty.'" *New York Times* (Dec. 16, 1920). The next day the *Times* expressed editorial horror: "Such a counsel of old-fashioned Republican perfection may be too high for a degenerate and reformed time. Still, there is a beautiful simplicity about Mr. Daugherty's proposal. It makes old age young again for a moment. This must be 1870, not 1920."

[27] *New York Post* (Dec. 8, 1920); *New York World* (Jan. 15, 1921).

There was some confusion, leading to several changes of plans, in the arrangements for the inauguration ceremonies. Harding honored his friend "Ned" McLean with the chairmanship of the arrangements committee, and it was soon reported that McLean was planning festivities to make up for all the years of wartime and Wilsonian austerity. But economy-minded congressmen, such as Senator Borah of Idaho, expressed disapproval; to clear the Pension Building for an inaugural ball might cost as much as $25,000. Harding then asked the committee for a simple ceremony, with no parade or inaugural ball.[28] For several days, it appeared that they might take Harding completely at his word and have him inaugurated in the Senate chamber with no public display at all, but this seemed to be carrying austerity too far. Finally, it was arranged to hold the inauguration, as usual, on the East Front of the Capitol. However, instead of the large platform ordinarily erected for such occasions, a frugal small one—a replica of the Marion Front Porch—would serve. And the McLeans, noted Washington entertainers, planned a lavish private ball for the Republican elite.

THE FIRST ORDEAL

Unfortunately for President-elect Harding, not all men were as reasonable and compromising as he. To his great dismay, he discovered that many of the Republican party leaders, particularly some of his colleagues of the Senate, did not appreciate the statesmanship behind the talented, well-balanced cabinet he was assembling. Instead, as rumors of each name added to the slate spread through the party and were leaked to the press, Harding received strong indications of disapproval. This was particularly disturbing to Harding because of his conviction that he should be the instrument of his party, mediating its differences and leading by common consent. Cabinet making proved to be the first great ordeal of his Presidency.

Opposition Mounts

Ominous rumbles were heard shortly after mid-December, as insiders began to be aware of Harding's intentions to put Hughes and Hoover in the cabinet, but his initial momentum and the approximate equaliza-

[28] *New York Times* (Jan. 11, 1921).

tion of pressures from the left and the right kept him moving ahead. Full realization of the seriousness of the opposition apparently burst on Harding with the visit of Senator Knox on December 30. Knox, a former Secretary of State now serving in the Senate, was a man who had to be listened to. He represented both himself and his even more powerful Pennsylvania colleague, Senator Boies Penrose. While no one could speak with full authority for the aggregation of individualists in the Senate, Knox and Penrose held important committee chairmanships and were as close to the hard core of conservative Republicanism as it was possible to come. Leaving Harding's office, Knox made the uncompromising statement on foreign policy previously referred to. There was no doubt that he had protested vigorously against the appointment of Hughes and Hoover, and it was soon reported that he had pressed on Harding a new candidate for Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew W. Mellon of Pittsburgh. Obviously, Harding's cabinet plans were miscarrying. Charles Michelson, reporting in the *New York World,* commented that influence was being brought to bear on Harding "in a particularly adroit and subtle fashion. . . . He is encouraged to let the names of those marked for slaughter come out in order that he may get the country's reaction to each one. People who are satisfied with a prospective appointment do not make any particular noise about it, but those who do not like it clamor. . . ."[29]

There was serious opposition, it appeared, to virtually every proposed appointee. To the party regulars, Hughes was too much an internationalist and too independent. Dawes had hobnobbed too long with Europeans and was opposed at home by Mayor William Hale Thompson and the Chicago City Hall Republicans. To the meat packing interests, who had great influence within the Republican party, Henry Wallace seemed dangerously radical. Wood was an irregular who had had to be stopped in his drive for the Presidency. Why put him in the cabinet? Besides there were many who in good faith doubted the propriety of elevating a general from active duty to the civilian position of Secretary of War. Will Hays was an upstart, a mere boy scout, and had serious opposition in his home state. Daugherty was conservative enough, but almost everyone except the grateful President-elect thought that his reputation as a lobbyist and political fixer disqualified him for the cabinet. To the old guard, the worst of all was Hoover, a liberal, an internationalist, and a newcomer. Why, was he even a Republican?

[29] *New York World* (Jan. 10, 1921).

Within two weeks of his return to Marion there were reports that Harding was changing as the shadow of the White House fell on him. He was working harder than anyone had ever seen him work before. His manner discouraged the back-slapping of old, as he grew taciturn and detached.[30] He no longer talked freely to reporters. By the first week in January, as opposition to his cabinet choices reached a crescendo, Harding was showing signs of severe strain. On January 5 it was reported:

> . . . Today Senator Harding is pale and tired looking and probably for the first time in his life is showing traces of irritableness. For the past four weeks he has been working at a pace never before attempted by him, and those who have the Senator's best interests at heart will welcome the day he leaves Marion for a respite in the south. . . .
>
> There are evidences . . . of brain fatigue as well as bodily weariness. No man in such a short space of time has ever received so much advice as he. He is fairly groggy from it. . . .[31]

That same evening Harding traveled to Columbus to receive the thirty-second Masonic degree. It was reported that as he talked to the group after the ceremony his emotions seemed to get out of control. He spoke with great feeling about brotherhood, and complained of the loneliness of his present position, the damage that was being done to old friendships, and the intrigue and untruth that surrounded him. Commented one reporter:

> Senator Harding had an abiding faith in the human race until he began the task of cabinet building. Since that time his faith has been badly shaken. He has been annoyed at some of the reports which have reached him, amazed that men can harbor so much of deceit and untruth. He has been amazed at the jealousies which have been aroused, and, in some cases, at the display of cupidity which has been unfolded to him.[32]

To another visitor about the same time, Harding said: "You know, before I was elected President I thought the chief pleasure of it would be to give honors and offices to old friends—I thought that was the one big personal satisfaction a President would get. But you know you can't do that when you're President of the United States; you have to get the best men."[33]

Well aware of what was going on, the New York newspapers pleaded

[30] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 21, 1920).
[31] *Ibid.* (Jan. 5, 1921).
[32] *Ibid.* (Jan. 7, 1921).
[33] Mark Sullivan, *Our Times,* Vol. 6, p. 153. With the last sentence, according to Sullivan, "Harding put his hand on his heart and his features took on a kind of solemn grief."

with Harding to be firm. "In the end he will have to strike out for himself," editorialized the *New York Times,* on January 8, 1921. "Why not do it at once?" Charles Michelson, writing for the *New York World,* on January 10 drew a lesson that was by now fairly obvious: "The only way a President-elect is ever going to get the sort of cabinet he himself wants is to shoot out his list right at the beginning, consulting nobody and sticking to his first selections. The minute he begins asking advice he is in trouble."

Adjustments Under Pressure

Such advice, however, carried little weight in conservative Republican circles. Harding prepared to adjust his plans. It appeared that the upheaval might wipe out the entire slate. On January 7, "The President-elect . . . appeared to be as far away from a definite decision . . . as he was three or four weeks ago."[34] Wood was definitely eliminated as a cabinet possibility, and Harding prepared to accede to right-wing demands for control of the Treasury Department.

Andrew Mellon was a Pittsburgh banker of great personal wealth. While known to a limited public for his astuteness in business and financial matters, he was not a nationally prominent figure. However, he had long been an important source of Republican party funds.[35] A person of retiring habits, Mellon was extremely shy about a political appointment, but after much urging by Knox and others, he let himself be delivered into the custody of Joseph Grundy and taken to Marion for an interview.[36]

Harding and Mellon had an hour of desultory conversation, while Mellon waited for the President-elect to bring up the prime topic. Then they adjourned to Harding's house for lunch. At the table, Mrs. Harding made a chance remark indicating that the Hardings considered the Mellon appointment virtually settled. After lunch, Mellon got Harding alone

[34] Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 7, 1921).

[35] Hays, *op. cit.,* pp. 270-71, records that Knox asked him to go along to Marion on December 30 to help present the case for Mellon. Hays is vague as to why Knox, who had direct access to Harding, should have involved the national chairman. Harold F. Alderfer, "The Personality and Politics of Warren G. Harding" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1928), pp. 186-87, supplies the link: Mellon had underwritten a substantial portion of the Republican campaign deficit.

[36] This was on January 8. There is a frequently repeated but probably apocryphal story that the unobtrusive Mellon stood timidly in the hubbub of Harding's outer office for an hour before anyone paid any attention to him.

and expressed reluctance to take such an appointment. He mentioned his lack of practical experience or real interest in politics. This did not seem to move Harding. Then Mellon pointed out that he might even be a political liability, in a time of prohibition, because of his family's long-standing ownership of the Old Overholt distillery. Harding replied that Mellon should not worry; he was holding a little brewery stock himself. Still professing reluctance but not firmly refusing, Mellon took the train back to Pittsburgh.[37] Mellon quickly replaced Dawes as the leading prospect for the Treasury post.[38]

On January 10, Harding made another cabinet offer that probably owed something to the influence of the Pennsylvania senators when he invited James J. Davis to be Secretary of Labor.[39] Davis was a remarkable character who had started out as a steel worker, got into local politics in Indiana, and then found his calling as the organizer of a nationwide fraternal order, the Loyal Order of Moose. As he and the Moose prospered, Davis branched out into other lines, including banking in Pittsburgh. However, he still carried his union card and liked to be known as "Puddler Jim." Davis did not accept the offer immediately, but he did so after several days. This pending appointment was kept relatively quiet, and Davis was one of the two real surprises that turned up in the Harding cabinet. In terms of availability he was a plausible compromise between pressure on Harding by organized labor for one of its own leaders, probably T. P. O'Connor of the longshoremen, and the demands of businessmen for a captain of industry—Charles Schwab was frequently mentioned.

[37] Mellon told his story of the appointment in a memorandum to Ray Baker Harris, dated June 6, 1934, which is now in the Harris Collection of Harding Papers in the Library of Congress. The visit to Marion had an amusing sequel. Mellon was still unconvinced that he should take the appointment, and he was considerably relieved when a friend called to his attention a law of 1789 forbidding the Secretary of the Treasury to engage in trade or commerce—an early expression of the conflict of interests problem. Thinking that this would provide an easy way out, Mellon hurried to Washington to tell Knox. The senator laughed at his naiveté and assured him that the statute did not mean what it seemed to say. Mellon was still concerned, so Knox retained a Washington law firm which duly produced an opinion that Mellon was eligible for the appointment.

[38] Dawes' story was that he had turned down the Treasury post because he felt that it would not offer enough opportunity to pursue his primary interest in governmental economy. Dawes, *op. cit.*, p. 1; *cf.* Paul R. Leach, *That Man Dawes* (1930), pp. 174-75; Bascom N. Timmons, *Portrait of An American: Charles G. Dawes* (1953), p. 202. However, in view of the coincidence of pressure on behalf of Mellon, one is entitled to suspect that Dawes' withdrawal was not entirely voluntary.

[39] Letter, James J. Davis to Ray Baker Harris, April 2, 1934, Harris Collection of Harding Papers, Library of Congress.

In mid-January two other adjustments were made. Weeks conferred with Harding, and it was decided that he would take the War Department office rather than Navy Department post. With Dawes off the slate, the way was now clear for Lowden. Responding on January 17 to the long-awaited summons from Harding, Lowden was offered his choice of Secretary of the Navy or a leading embassy. Either position was foreign to his interests (and probably below his expectations), and after suggesting several other men who might be called on, Lowden asked and was granted some time to consider.[40]

The offer to Lowden pre-empted the last place on the slate, but Harding still did not announce any appointments. The concessions he had made had not satisfied the right wing. Opposition to Hoover still ran high. Despite Boies Penrose's sardonic comment that it didn't make much difference who was going to be Secretary of State since the Senate would take care of foreign policy, Harding was reluctant to appoint anyone who would be obnoxious to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. A newspaper report checked off the members of that committee and could identify none who favored Hughes.[41] There were reports that the isolationists, giving up on a candidate of their own, were trying to get Harding back to Root.[42] In all the editorials the Best Minds were now referred to as the "best minds."

It is not known whether Harding considered opening negotiations with new prospects, possibly reneging on offers already made, or whether he simply hoped to lie low until the storm blew over. At any rate, instead of resolving the issue he fled. On January 19 he told reporters: "I had thought originally to name two or three places of the cabinet in advance, to permit the parties named to take up informally the work that is to be theirs. But I have found it so difficult to fit in an administrative organization that I am not disposed to make definite tenders until I myself have made up a complete organization."[43] The next day he left Marion to join his companions of the Panama trip on a new cruise—two weeks down the coast of Florida on a houseboat.

[40] Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 484.

[41] *New York World* (Jan. 20, 1921).

[42] ". . . before the eleventh-hour drive there was a first-hour drive. That offensive was directed against Elihu Root as Secretary of State. That offensive was apparently successful; so successful in fact, that the Penrose-Johnson battalions, flushed with victory, are now driving against a second objective. Having put Mr. Root out of the fight, they are now trying to force Mr. Hughes out of the Cabinet and replace him—with whom? It is reported, with Elihu Root!" *Washington Post* (Jan. 19, 1921).

[43] *New York Times* (Jan. 20, 1921).

CHAPTER 14

MEANWHILE, BACK IN WASHINGTON . . .

The Wilson administration and the Sixty-sixth Congress finished their terms in futile deadlock. Congress was restless and closely divided between parties that were, themselves, badly split on most issues. The legislators could agree mainly on investigations of the executive branch and on bills likely to be vetoed. The administration was weary and beaten but stubborn; it ventured little but yielded little, choosing to stand for its ordained time on its record and previous positions in confidence—or at least hope—of historical vindication. Meanwhile world events moved rapidly, distress mounted in the farm belt, and the railroad unions and management prepared for a test of strength. "It seems little less than a crime," editorialized *The World's Work,* "that, after the decisive election of last November, the country should have to wait nearly five [sic] months before the installation of the new Administration. Never before has this fault in the American governmental system appeared so manifest."[1] A constitutional amendment to eliminate lame duck sessions and begin the new presidential and congressional terms early in December was introduced in Congress.[2] Nothing further was heard on the subject.

CONGRESS

Harding's dramatic appearance in the Senate and other formalities occupied the opening day of the legislative session. On the second day,

[1] "The March of Events," *The World's Work,* Vol. 41 (February 1921), p. 315.
[2] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 16, 1920).

December 7, President Wilson's annual message on the State of the Union was read by clerks in the two houses. It was a curious message in that the leading issue in the realm of foreign affairs—the relation of the United States to the European powers and the postwar settlements—was not even mentioned. Wilson's proposals had been rejected by the Senate and by the people in November's "solemn referendum"; he now chose neither to plead nor to retreat but to remain silent and leave the problem to the victors. In other areas the message called for simplification of the tax laws, retirement of the floating debt, a workable budget system, and independence for the Philippines. Its discussion of the problems of economic readjustment did not seem to face squarely the economic unrest that pervaded the country. The message was more notable for its over-all tone than for its proposals. As Wilson himself said, it was a confession of faith as much as a series of recommendations.[3]

It made little difference what Wilson recommended, because the Republican Congress was in no mood to respond to the leadership of the Democratic President. In fact, it responded very little to its own. The election over, Republican factional differences broke out anew; committee chairmen pursued independent courses, and individual congressmen rode hobby horses in all directions. There was little effort either in Congress or in the administration to seek compromises or proceed with legislation on which there was hope of agreement. The principal congressional proposals ran head-on into Wilsonian or factional intransigence, and the session was largely dissipated in harassment of the Executive and in bickering on the Hill.

Legislation

Among Republican congressional leaders, there was fairly widespread agreement that a quick boost in tariff rates would help the economy out of its postwar slump. Early in the session, an emergency bill providing for sharp revisions upward from the schedules of the Underwood act of 1913 was reported out of the Ways and Means Committee and quickly passed by the House. In the Senate, however, the bill was debated at great length. For many senators, particularly on the Democratic side, low tariffs were still a major article of political faith, not to be abandoned without strong protest. Among the supporters of the bill, there were

[3] *New York Times* (Dec. 8, 1920).

major differences of opinion about what kinds of goods or commodities needed protection. Somewhat to the surprise of protectionists of the classic school, whose interests were mostly in manufacturing, the Senate adopted amendment after amendment protecting agricultural commodities.[4] About the time the bill's original sponsors were becoming disgusted with the whole enterprise, Underwood made an apparently authoritative statement in the Senate that the President would veto the bill. Soon it became clear that there would not be enough votes to pass the bill over a veto. This was the signal for another round of amendments that provided something for everyone. The badly distorted bill reached Wilson's desk and was vetoed late in the session.

Congress clashed with the President on several other legislative matters during the session. Against the administration's wishes, a joint resolution was passed directing the almost defunct War Finance Corporation to resume operations and extend credit to exporters of agricultural products. It was hoped that this would renew the wartime flow of commodities to Europe and thus raise farm prices. Wilson returned the resolution with a veto message drafted by David F. Houston, who had become Secretary of the Treasury in the closing months of the administration. The message indicated that the proposal ". . . would exert no beneficial influence . . ., would raise false hopes among the very people who would expect most, and would be hurtful to the natural and orderly processes of business and finance."[5] Nevertheless, the resolution was promptly passed over the veto. Congress also overrode a veto and passed a law reducing the authorized strength of the Army from 280,000 to 175,000 men. On two other measures, a drastically restrictive immigration bill and a bill to reorganize the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, Wilson was able to prevail by using the pocket veto at the end of the session.[6]

However, the administration did acquiesce in several matters of importance. Over the protests of organized labor, Wilson signed a bill authorizing the payment of $370 million to the nation's railroads to alleviate their financial distress pending final settlement of claims growing

[4] A *New York Times* editorial (Feb. 23, 1921) pointed out that the West and South were finally learning to play the tariff game, demanding to share the benefits previously given to the industrial Northeast. Furthermore, the agrarians had the necessary votes. The Farm Bloc, to become powerful later in the decade, was beginning to form.

[5] David F. Houston, *Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet, 1913-20,* Vol. 2 (1926), pp. 112-15, quotes the message in full.

[6] *New York Times* (Jan. 4, 5, Feb. 6, 8, 1921).

out of wartime operation by the government. He also signed a joint resolution that had the effect of repealing or suspending a number of the special wartime economic controls, including the Lever food and fuel control act. A bill establishing a joint congressional committee on administrative reorganization, which Wilson had been expected to veto as an invasion of Executive power, was allowed to become law without his signature.

Appropriations

One of the main tasks of the Congress was to pass the appropriation acts for the fiscal year beginning the following July. This ordinarily routine activity proved unusually difficult for the Republican leadership, foreshadowing problems to come in the new Congress.

A bill providing for an executive budget and an independent audit had been passed in the previous session, after a decade of agitation, only to be vetoed by Wilson on constitutional grounds because it made the Comptroller General, an officer appointed by the President, removable by Congress. A new version of the budget and accounting bill was anticipated either in the lame duck session or early in the next Congress, but meanwhile it was necessary to proceed under the old system. The individual departmental estimates, consolidated by the Treasury, were presented to Congress in the first week of the session.

The House of Representatives had already altered its procedures in anticipation of the passage of the budget bill, and for the first time the appropriations were handled by a single large Committee on Appropriations rather than the several appropriations committees previously existing. The inevitable kinks in the new procedure slowed the progress of the money bills through the House. The Senate, occupied with the tariff and other matters, did not consider the first of the appropriation bills until February. By that time it was so late that many senators, including the powerful Boies Penrose, chairman of the finance committee, suggested deferring the appropriations until the special session of the new Congress. To other legislators this was alarming, in view of the already large accumulation of matters to be brought before the special session.

The prospect also alarmed President-elect Harding, who had, until then, paid little attention to what Congress was doing. As soon as Penrose's opinion was reported, Harding told reporters that it would be a

severe burden on new department heads to have to review estimates in their first weeks in office. Through Harry Daugherty, he passed the word to the leaders in Washington that he would like to have the bills passed.[7] A little later, Harding reiterated his position in an open exchange of messages with the Republican leaders of the House and the Senate, apparently calculated to strengthen their influence over the restive membership.[8]

With such prodding, all but one of the appropriation bills were passed. The exception was the Navy bill, which involved important considerations of foreign policy and laid the foundations for major events to come later. The key question about the Navy was whether to provide funds to complete a five-year shipbuilding program that had been authorized as war seemed imminent in 1916. The war was over and the prevailing demand was for economy, but there was considerable support for seeing this particular program through. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, speaking for the administration, wanted the funds; if we were not going to join the League, the Navy must be modernized and strengthened. This argument appealed to many people who thought of the United States as a world power and trading nation, regardless of their attitude toward the League. Military realists noted the increasing talk of a world naval disarmament conference and thought it would be desirable to establish strength from which to negotiate. Opposition to the Navy program came from those who thought that America's concerns were at home, that armaments led inevitably to war, or that economy led all other virtues—or perhaps held all three views simultaneously. Spokesman for this general viewpoint was the unmanageable Republican from Idaho, Senator William E. Borah.

Early in the session, Borah introduced a resolution calling on the President to invite the principal world powers to a naval disarmament conference. The Committee on Foreign Relations reported favorably on the measure in mid-January, but there was uncertainty whether it could be brought to a vote. Borah then forced the issue by moving that his disarmament resolution be attached to the Navy bill as a substitute for the shipbuilding funds. The Naval Affairs Committee rejected the Borah

[7] *Ibid.* (Feb. 5, 1921).

[8] To Henry Cabot Lodge, the Senate leader, Harding said: "I am reluctant to intrude my views or in any way to suggest what Congress ought to do, but I feel free to say to you that it would be exceedingly gratifying if Congress could clear all appropriation bills out of the way during the present session." *Ibid.* (Feb. 15, 1921).

resolution and reported the bill including the construction money. Chiding his colleagues for false pretensions at economy and their concern for what the President-elect thought of the problem, Borah served notice that he would fight to a finish on the floor of the Senate. "I . . . shall not abdicate my judgment in this chamber in the next four years any more than I did in the last eight years," he said.[9]

Nevertheless, the naval disarmament idea had such great importance for any foreign policy moves Harding might be planning that to Republican legislative leaders it seemed essential to get his views. In general, Harding was on the record as a big-navy man. Recently, however, although denying that he had specific plans for calling a disarmament conference, he had been speaking favorably of the idea. On the eve of the Senate debate on the Navy bill, Harding wrote to Republican majority leader Lodge indicating his belief in an adequate Navy and approving the shipbuilding program, without mentioning the Borah resolution. The following day, on the occasion of the announcement of his choice for Secretary of the Navy, Harding clarified his position. He was not averse to a disarmament conference, but he opposed it as an immediate substitute for naval construction. "I have said to several members of the Senate and House Committees on Naval Affairs who sought my views that I would be reluctant to suspend our capital ship building program until we have entered into an agreement for disarmament with other nations."[10]

For several days, Borah made a single-handed floor fight against the Navy appropriation bill. On March 1, the Senate added his disarmament conference resolution to the bill but left the shipbuilding funds intact. This did not satisfy Borah, who continued his fight to have the construction money stricken. With the end of the session only three days away and many other items awaiting the Senate's attention, the leadership decided not to force the issue on Borah's filibuster threat. The Navy bill was put aside.

All of the other appropriations bills passed the two houses. Wilson, however, still smarting from having his veto of the earlier Army bill overridden, vetoed the Army appropriation bill on the ground that it reduced Army strength too rapidly. Thus both the Army and Navy appropriation bills were carried over to the special session.

[9] *Ibid.* (Feb. 18, 1921).
[10] *Ibid.* (Feb. 26, 27, 1921).

Investigation

During the lame duck session a substantial amount of legislative energy was spent investigating past and current activities of the executive branch. The administration of the war effort occupied several committees. One group, for example, dug into the activities of the War Shipping Board, claiming to be on the track of major scandal in connection with the construction and operation of cargo vessels. The committee attracted wide attention, which came to a peak when R. W. Bolling, President Wilson's brother-in-law, was questioned under suspicion of profiting improperly from wartime deals. At the end of the session the committee was able to report much waste and inefficiency but little evidence of deliberate misconduct. Bolling was exonerated completely.[11]

Another committee found pay dirt in its investigation of Army purchasing during the war. However, this investigation backfired when the committee tried to quiz the outspoken Charles G. Dawes about his activities as Army purchasing officer in France. Dawes admitted that there had been waste, plenty of it, but he roared back at the committee's smug exercise of hindsight: "Damn it all, the business of an army is to win the war, not quibble around with a lot of cheap buying. Hell and Mariah! We weren't trying to keep a set of books, we were trying to win the war!"[12] Since Dawes was an eminent Republican, who possibly would be in the cabinet, the Democrats on the committee were delighted to find such support for their contention that the investigation was being politically abused. They kept the colorful Dawes testifying for several days, with full press coverage.

Other legislative-executive encounters were contentious and spiteful rather than amusing. With the Democrats crying "cheap politics," the

[11] The War Shipping Board hearings began on November 9, before the session convened, and continued intermittently. The committee's report is discussed in the *New York Times* (Mar. 3, 1921).

[12] *Ibid.* (Feb. 4, 1921). Other excerpts from the Dawes testimony:

"When Congress declared war, did it expect us to beat Germany at twenty per cent discount?"

"I would have paid horse prices for sheep, if the sheep could have pulled artillery to the front."

"I have no reason to hold this committee in esteem. I am here today to do what I can to put an end to the detestable official effort to blacken American military achievement for political and partisan purposes."

Bascom N. Timmons, *Portrait of An American: Charles G. Dawes* (1953), pp. 194-98.

Republicans pushed through the House a resolution demanding that Wilson account for a special war fund of $150 million he had been voted under the National Defense Act. The White House declined official comment but intimated its contempt. At the close of the session, Wilson transmitted to the committee a three hundred page report.[13]

Secretary of the Treasury Houston, always a strong defender of the constitutional rights of the executive, was bested in a clash with a Senate committee. There had been rumors, persistently denied by the administration, of a move to cancel or scale down the Allies' war debts to the United States. The Senate Judiciary Committee informed Houston of its opposition to the idea and instructed him to take administrative action to stop further disbursements under credits already extended the Allies, pending formal action by Congress. Houston replied that he would consult the committee before taking any further action on foreign credits. This, however, did not satisfy the committee, which demanded to see the file of correspondence and executive papers concerning Allied loans. Houston demurred on the ground that the files contained correspondence with, and confidential references to, foreign nations, and that questions of international comity were involved. After several days of maneuvering, the committee warned Houston to produce the papers or face contempt proceedings. On March 1, with only three days to remain in office, Houston surrendered and produced the papers.[14]

Confirmations

Repeating the experience of the Taft-Wilson transition, Congress balked at confirming executive appointments during the lame duck session. At the opening of the session in December 1920, there was a backlog of several hundred recess appointments, many of them reappointments of individuals who had not been confirmed during the first session of the Sixty-sixth Congress. Wilson continued to send up nominations, but with a Republican administration in the offing, the Senate balked. Not only were frankly political appointments held up but routine Army, Navy, and diplomatic appointments and promotions as well.

Toward the end of the session the Army promotion list was considered, and several hundred majors and colonels were confirmed. How-

[13] *New York Times* (Feb. 16, Mar. 2, 1921).
[14] *Ibid.* (Feb. 16, 17, Mar. 1, 1921).

ever, after a lengthy debate in which the political views and connections and war records of individual officers were freely discussed, the Senate refused by a straight party vote to confirm the nominations of thirty-three generals. Even the fact that General Pershing had been on the selection board that recommended the nominations did not sway the Senate. Apparently piqued by the Republicans' rejection of the generals, Democratic Senator McKellar refused to give unanimous consent at a critical moment and thus blocked the confirmation of over a thousand lieutenants and captains.[15] At the close of the session, some of the lower diplomatic and consular appointments, all presumably merit promotions, were confirmed.

However, in addition to the Army promotions, 2,500 Navy promotions, 3,500 postmasters, and about 175 miscellaneous nominations, including commissioners, ambassadors, and subcabinet officers, were not confirmed. The civil positions thus became immediately available for Republican appointments at the beginning of Harding's term. Ironically, one of Wilson's rejected nominees, Norman H. Davis for Under Secretary of State, was confirmed at the very end of the session at the request of the incoming Secretary, who wanted the benefit of his services during the transition period.

THE ADMINISTRATION

The Wilson administration's last weeks in office were anything but happy ones. The election of 1920 had followed more than a year of political adversity, rapid turnover of personnel, internal disunity, feeble leadership, and low morale. After the defeat it was simply a matter of serving out the required time. As the end approached, there was a slight quickening of the pace and renewal of unity and morale, as the Wilsonians looked forward to release from responsibility without power, but it was a dreary time nevertheless.

In general, the Wilson administration behaved responsibly but unimaginatively. Wilson himself was physically and psychologically incapable of the expansive presidential performance of his earlier years. To his credit, he refused to seek political advantage by resubmitting the Versailles Treaty to the Senate, as some of his advisers suggested. How-

[15] *Ibid.* (Feb. 26, Mar. 4, 1921).

ever, he played the role of outgoing President narrowly. The idea of resigning on defeat, considered in 1916, was not revived. Despite Wilson's stated desire to be helpful to the President-elect, he took no special initiative in this respect beyond seeing that certain pieces of unfinished business were completed—or at least brought to appropriate stopping places—before Harding took over.

Regardless of any sympathy he may have had for the President-elect and his problems, Wilson's relations with Harding were distant and formal. He authorized Josephus Daniels to offer Harding the use of the presidential yacht and a Naval vessel for his vacation, but during Harding's visit to Washington in December the President made no move to consult with him. Most of the arrangements fell into well-worn grooves of custom and were handled by staff. Joseph P. Tumulty and George Christian had a conference on administrative arrangements. At Harding's indirect request, Wilson issued an official call for a special session of the Senate, to begin on March 4 immediately after the close of the outgoing Congress, so that Harding's nominations could be confirmed promptly.[16] There was no direct communication between President and President-elect until February, when they had a polite exchange of letters about the details of the inauguration day schedule.[17] There was no discussion or transfer of knowledge on substantive matters at the presidential level.

In most domestic affairs, the administration's policies were notably negative and defensive. In the face of widespread economic distress, Houston insisted that taxes must be kept high enough to balance the budget, leaving the economy to right itself through natural processes. In this spirit, he advised Wilson to veto both the tariff and the War Finance Corporation bills. The railway problem was before both the Interstate Commerce Commission and the War Labor Board, and Wilson declined to interfere even though it appeared that a major rail strike might break out before the administrative procedures were exhausted. Wilson also refused to commute the sentence of Eugene V. Debs, the former Socialist candidate for President, who was in jail for obstructing the war effort, despite a favorable recommendation by the Attorney General.

[16] The protocol observed was that the President-elect informed Lodge, the Republican leader of the Senate, of his desire that the special session be called; Lodge transmitted the request to his opposite number, Oscar W. Underwood, who conveyed it to the White House. *Ibid.* (Feb. 2, 1921).

[17] *New York World* (Feb. 18, 1921).

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Much of the world was in a turbulent condition in that winter of 1920-21. Red and White Russian armies were in active combat. Allied armies, including United States troops, stood at the Rhine, while France and England wrangled with Germany about reparations. In Ireland, the Sinn Fein and British troops were locked in an ugly round of ambushes, bombings, hostages, hangings, reprisals, and counter-reprisals. A new regime in Mexico sought United States recognition. Panama and Costa Rica were inflamed over a territorial dispute. In Geneva the League of Nations, with much hope and many difficulties, was just getting organized.

Although repudiated at home, Wilson retained great prestige abroad. A month after election he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. Between election and inauguration he was invited to act as mediator between Turkey and Armenia, when the latter was on the verge of being swallowed up by the Ataturk regime.[18] Nevertheless, most foreign nations soon realized the futility of dealing with the Wilson administration on any matter requiring follow-up action, and diplomatic activity slowed noticeably.[19]

The Wilson administration quickly accommodated itself to this situation. Its conduct of foreign affairs in its final months was principally intended to preserve the status quo and avoid new commitments. However, because of the rapid movement of events and the active diplomacy in which the administration had previously engaged, something more than passive conduct was necessary. Under the direction of Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby and Under Secretary Norman H. Davis, a number of deliberate steps were taken to fulfill outstanding commitments, bring negotiations to suitable stopping places, disengage from situations the Harding administration might find embarrassing, and hedge the American position until Harding could take over. Various occasions were seized to inform Congress, and thus put on the record and make avail-

[18] *Ibid.* (Dec. 1, 1920); *New York Post* (Nov. 24, 1920); Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 10, 1920). This invitation was an outgrowth of Wilson's plan to have the United States accept Armenia as a mandate under the League, which had been rejected by the Senate the previous June. Wilson now undertook the activity strictly as a personal matter. He suggested boundaries for independent Armenia and later sent Henry Morgenthau, Sr., to the Near East as his personal representative.

[19] *Ibid.* (Dec. 14, 1920).

able to the new administration, the factual background of pending questions.[20]

One of the first expressions of the administration's attitude came in early January when Davis appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to testify on the Borah disarmament conference resolution. The idea of having such a conference seemed to be widely approved both at home and abroad, and there were persistent rumors that Wilson would take the initiative in calling a conference before he left office. Davis assured the senators that the administration had no intention of making such a move and would try to avoid committing or embarrassing the incoming Republicans.[21]

During the previous months, relations with Mexico had been improving rapidly, and following the inauguration of President Obregón on December 1, negotiations intended to lead to diplomatic recognition of his government were begun. However, as the end of Wilson's term was now imminent, the United States deliberately disengaged itself from these negotiations, on the theory that such a controversial matter had best be left to the new administration.[22]

Wilson took what to him must have been a painful step, an implicit recognition of defeat on the Versailles Treaty issue, when he ordered the withdrawal of the American unofficial representatives from the Council of Ambassadors and the Reparations Commission. Wilson had originally sent these representatives on the assumption that the United States would promptly ratify the treaty; in the absence of ratification, their status had been increasingly uncertain for the past several months.[23]

The problem of the Allied war debts to the United States was a matter of public discussion, and many Republicans suspected that Wilson had made some secret agreement to cancel or scale them down, or was considering such a move. Wilson did have one commitment, made to Lloyd George and Clemenceau, which he discharged on February 22 by

[20] *New York Times* (Feb. 20, 1921) reviews the Wilson policy in this respect.

[21] *Ibid.* (Jan. 12, 1921); *cf. New York World* (Jan. 12, 1921).

[22] *New York Times* (Jan. 22, 1921).

[23] There had been debate inside the administration about the wisdom of this move, some arguing that the representatives were serving a useful function and that any withdrawal decision should be left for the new administration to make. Wilson apparently was strongly in favor of withdrawal once the question was raised. *Ibid.* (Feb. 20, 1921). U. S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921,* Vol. 1 (1936), pp. 1-11. Volumes in this series will be cited hereafter as *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921.*

recommending to Congress that it authorize acceptance from Belgium, in payment on its debt to the United States, of German bonds given to Belgium as reparations. This, Wilson pointed out, was only a commitment to *recommend.* Otherwise, he assured Congress, he had made no commitments and would leave the debt question entirely to the new President and Congress.[24]

One additional holding operation needed to be conducted. The League of Nations was making final decisions about mandates of former German territories. Having rejected responsibility for Armenia, the United States had relatively little further interest in territories, with one exception. It had a direct economic and military interest in the proposed mandate of the island of Yap to Japan. The United States wanted at least some rights on the island because it was an important trans-Pacific cable station. The whole subject of mandates had been discussed at the Peace Conference, and the other allies thought—or at least claimed to believe —that President Wilson had agreed to assigning Yap to Japan. The administration now admitted no such thing. Norman Davis explained the American position to Congress, and on February 21 Secretary Colby sent off a vigorous note to the Council of the League protesting the disposition of territories won from Germany by war without any reference to the United States.[25] Just before Wilson left office, the League responded with an invitation to the United States to confer on the mandates question.[26] This response gave great satisfaction, since it appeared to concede Colby's point that decisions involving rights of the United States as a victorious ally were not to be made without consultation, even if it had not joined the League.[27] Japan, however, continued to insist that the United States had no basis for objection about the disposition of Yap. On March 3, Wilson returned the Japanese note to the State Department together with a personal memorandum, obviously prepared for the record, reiterating that he had never consented to the mandate.[28] Thus Wilson did his best to establish that no United States rights had been bargained away, and to give the Harding administration a fair start in any negotiations.

[24] *New York Times* (Feb. 23, 1921).
[25] *Ibid.* (Feb. 25, 1921); *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. 89-92.
[26] *Ibid.* pp. 93-95; *New York Times* (Mar. 2, 1921).
[27] *Ibid.* (Mar. 3, 4, 1921).
[28] Note from Japan, Feb. 27, 1921, in *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. 272-76, 281.

CHAPTER 15

PREPARATIONS IN FLORIDA

Happy to escape the northern winter climate and the stormy political weather at Marion, President-elect Harding and the key members of his staff arrived on January 22, 1921, at St. Augustine, Florida. The vacation had been planned some time in advance and delayed several days by the obstacles of cabinet making. Senator Frelinghuysen and his houseboat *Victoria* were waiting. As he boarded the boat, Harding told the reporters that since there would not be any news during his cruise, there was no need for them to follow him—a piece of advice that was received with some resentment and, of course, ignored.[1]

THE CRUISE OF THE VICTORIA

The houseboat cruised southward along the Florida coast. In addition to the host and the President-elect and his staff, the passengers included Senators Albert B. Cummins, Albert B. Fall, and Frederick Hale, and Henry P. Fletcher, former Ambassador to Mexico. The voyage was by easy stages, with frequent pauses for the passengers to fish, to swim, and to enjoy the hospitality of yacht and golf clubs along the way. Work could not be completely avoided, and a small office was improvised on the boat for Harding's use. Messages were sent and received almost daily, and prominent visitors occasionally came aboard for conferences with the President-elect. Harry Daugherty and George Christian, however,

[1] Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 22, 1921).

handled most of the work while Harding devoted himself to recreation.

Expressions of discontent with the rumored cabinet appointments continued to be heard, especially from the Republican right wing. Harding dispatched Daugherty on a mission to Washington to look over the situation and to do what he could to quiet the opposition. On January 27 the *Victoria* arrived in Palm Beach. From Washington, where Daugherty and Hays were consulting Senate leaders, it was reported that both New York senators remained strong in their support of Hughes and that the opposition to his appointment seemed to be subsiding.[2]

On January 29 the President-elect's party arrived in Miami. Here there was a layover of several days. Harding fished, played golf, made a few informal public appearances, and conferred with various dignitaries, including Bryan. He also saw the Treasurer of the Republican National Committee. There were press reports of difficulty about a $1,250,000 deficit, for which several prominent party leaders stood as security to the banks that had put up the money.[3] Daugherty returned, stayed briefly, and left again for Washington in the company of Senator Fall. It was "learned from an authoritative quarter" that the senator's cabinet prospects were better than ever.[4]

The *Victoria* left Miami on February 2 and, with a frequently changing group of political passengers, proceeded northward toward St. Augustine. Four days later, much to the glee of the reporters following its course, it went firmly aground on a mudbank near Daytona.[5] Two days of tugging failed to free it, so Harding left the boat and went on by automobile.

The President-elect arrived back at St. Augustine on the evening of February 9, and for the next three weeks the hotel where he had his temporary headquarters buzzed with activity. Harding's routine was announced as a combination of work and recreation: conferences with staff and visitors in the morning, golf in the afternoon, and work on his inaugural address in the evening. Mrs. Harding joined her hus-

[2] *Ibid.* (Jan. 28, 1921).

[3] "Some of these leaders have been mentioned for cabinet places, but they probably would be reluctant to accept high office under Mr. Harding unless some plan is arranged to relieve them of contributing to the national committee the entire sum for which they stand responsible. . . ." *Ibid.*

[4] *New York Times* (Feb. 2, 1921).

[5] The nation's press rose to the occasion, and there were many editorial comments and cartoons about Harding's "aimless" conduct in preparing for the Presidency, and his being "high and dry" on cabinet appointments.

band on February 11. Republican leaders, prominent businessmen, and miscellaneous celebrities wintering in Florida came to confer and pay their respects. A large number of office seekers appeared on the scene. Leading political reporters gathered to observe the activity. The Harding preparations, which had seemed to be at a standstill for almost a month, gathered momentum again.

COMPLETING A CABINET

Perhaps the most urgent problem was to find a Secretary of the Navy. On January 27, while Harding was in Palm Beach, Lowden had sent a telegram declining that appointment. Now, on February 10, Harding asked Lowden to reconsider. Two days later Lowden again declined. On the 14th, Harding asked Lowden for the third time to take the post, emphasizing that he was making the offer, not just out of courtesy, but because he sincerely wanted the Illinoisan in his cabinet. Lowden replied the following day with expressions of good will toward Harding and his administration but still firmly refusing to be considered.[6] Harding accepted this as final and began considering other possibilities. To the reporters, who soon heard of Lowden's elimination, the most likely alternative seemed A. T. Hert of Kentucky, an original Lowden supporter who had swung his delegation to Harding at a critical moment in the Chicago convention.

Hoover and Mellon

Opposition to Hughes had now died down to scattered mutterings in the Senate cloakroom, but objections to the Hoover appointment continued unabated. After leaving Miami early in February, Daugherty had gone to Washington and New York for another round of conferences on the cabinet problem, then back to Ohio. From Columbus, he had sent Harding a report, received about the time the President-elect got back to St. Augustine, affirming that there was "determined rebellion" against the appointment of Hoover. Harding acknowledged the report with thanks but indicated that he was not impressed by some of the individuals who were in opposition; he still liked Hoover. He asked

[6] William T. Hutchinson, *Lowden of Illinois*, Vol. 2 (1957), p. 485, cites these exchanges.

Daugherty to make another visit to Washington and then return to St. Augustine.

Returning to the capital, Daugherty sought out Philander C. Knox and Boies Penrose, the two Pennsylvania senators who were, along with Henry Cabot Lodge, at the center of the disaffection. Although he apparently had had no specific instructions from Harding, Daugherty decided to make a bold move to break the impasse. He reminded the two Pennsylvanians that, primarily in deference to them, Harding was preparing to make Andrew Mellon Secretary of the Treasury. However, the appointment had not yet been announced. In fact, it might not be possible to announce it unless some of the opposition to the proposed cabinet subsided. In other words, it was "Hoover *and* Mellon, or no Mellon." Leaving the senators to ponder this advice, Daugherty left for Florida.[7]

It was now mid-February, and final decisions and announcements could not be delayed much longer. The press pleaded with Harding to announce at least some of the cabinet members, to counter the growing impression that he was incapable of making up his mind about anything. Supporters and opponents of the leading cabinet prospects opened last-minute publicity drives in hope of swaying the decisions. The *New York World* ran a series of articles calculated to prove the unfitness of Daugherty. Prohibitionists loudly protested the appointment of Mellon, despite reports that he was disposing of his distillery interests. Organized labor professed incredulity as the name of "Puddler Jim" Davis began to appear in the news. On February 15, Daugherty, Will Hays, and other insiders gathered around Harding to begin a week of extended conferences leading to final decisions.

The Secretary of State

It now seemed safe to announce the Hughes appointment. Hughes was sent for and appeared in St. Augustine on February 19. After several hours of discussion, devoted mainly to the principal State Department and diplomatic appointments, Harding called a press conference and presented the future Secretary of State. Reporters asked for a statement on Harding's foreign policy intentions, but Harding demurred. In a jibe at the Wilson administration, he said: "You must ask Mr. Hughes.

[7] Harry M. Daugherty, *The Inside Story of the Harding Tragedy* (1932), pp. 92-100, describes the incident. *Cf.* Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 2 (The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 36.

. . . That is going to be another policy of the next Administration. From the beginning the Secretary of State will speak for the State Department."[8] Hughes expressed his appreciation of this large delegation of authority, but he declined to be drawn out, beyond indicating that in accordance with his belief in full public discussion of foreign policy issues, he intended to continue his predecessor's practice of holding frequent press conferences.[9] It was also announced that Henry P. Fletcher would be Under Secretary of State, and the press was given to understand, without formal announcement, that Colonel Harvey would be appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The public response to these announcements was favorable, and Harding took obvious pleasure in this vindication of his decision to wait out the opposition to Hughes.

Standing by Daugherty

The uncertainty about Daugherty's appointment was the next to be cleared up for the benefit of the public. From the beginning, Daugherty had seemed the most likely choice for Attorney General, and there is no evidence that Harding seriously considered anyone else after early December.[10] Harding felt that he owed practically all of his political success to his old friend and campaign manager. He wanted both to reward Daugherty and to keep him nearby for counsel, and a cabinet appointment was the logical course. Yet there were facts that should have made Harding pause. It was well known that Daugherty was a lobbyist and a political lawyer, not a lawyer's lawyer. His professional standing was below par, and there were rumors that the American Bar Association would formally protest his appointment. Harding was repeatedly warned, by people whose Republicanism and good will were unquestionable, that Daugherty was not fit for the cabinet and that his appointment would have serious public repercussions. The facts about

[8] *New York Times* (Feb. 20, 1921).

[9] During his stay in St. Augustine, Hughes was impressed by Harding's apparent good intentions but concerned about the "horde of politicians and camp followers" pressing for favors. "Knowing her husband's inability to say No, Mrs. Harding told Hughes, 'You've got to help Warren resist these demands.' But the head of the new Cabinet could not visualize his assignment as that of a special aide to keep the President out of trouble." Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes,* Vol. 1 (1951), p. 408.

[10] The only other name mentioned had been that of Harding's former Senate colleague, Arthur Sutherland of Utah, a man for whom Harding was known to have great respect. It had been understood early in the cabinet making, however, that Sutherland had Harding's assurance of an appointment to the Supreme Court at the earliest opportunity and was therefore not interested in the cabinet.

Daugherty's past that were published by hostile newspapers seemed to bear out the contention.

Nevertheless Harding refused to be swayed from what he regarded as the requirements of loyalty. On February 21, he was surrounded at his hotel by reporters, some of whom he recognized as representing newspapers that had been campaigning against Daugherty, and quizzed about his intentions. Becoming impatient, Harding vehemently laid down principles on which he was making up his cabinet:

> First, there is a man's qualifications for public service. That is the most important quality of all.
>
> Second, there is the attitude of the public toward the man under consideration. This, of course, includes the estimate of the public concerning the man under consideration.
>
> Third, there is the political consideration. As to that—well, this is going to be a Republican Cabinet. You can count on that. And you may be sure that it will be a cabinet of which the whole country will be proud.

On all three points, Harding insisted, Daugherty was qualified and he intended to appoint him! ". . . The opposition to his appointment has only strengthened my conviction that I want him. . . . You can put that in block type and a box!"[11]

In later years Daugherty always said that he had not wanted the job and, in fact, until the moment Harding was goaded into making the announcement, had been trying to dissuade Harding from appointing him. But once Harding had made the announcement he decided to acquiesce rather than embarrass him by refusing to serve—a decision Daugherty described in his memoirs as "The Tragic Blunder of My Life."[12] If this was Daugherty's private state of mind, he gave no evidence of it. Rather, he took obvious pleasure in the discomfiture of such critical reporters as Mark Sullivan of the *New York Post* and Louis Seibold of the *New York World,* and shortly scurried off to Washington to consult legislative leaders about plans for the forthcoming session.

A Surprise for Navy

By the end of that day, reporters had what was described as a complete but unofficial slate. In addition to Hughes and Daugherty, whose

[11] *New York Times* (Feb. 22, 1921).

[12] Daugherty, *op. cit.,* pp. 84-91. His story is partially borne out by Mark Sullivan, who thought that Daugherty, while not really wanting the job for its own sake and sincerely devoted to Harding's interests, did relish the personal vindication and evidence of Harding's confidence that the appointment implied. *Our Times,* Vol. 6 (1935), pp. 147-52.

designations had been announced, several others were included about whom there had been little doubt: Mellon for Secretary of the Treasury, Weeks for Secretary of War, Hays for Postmaster General, Fall for Secretary of the Interior, and Wallace for Secretary of Agriculture. Three additional decisions were identified as firm so far as Harding was concerned but not subject to discussion for the record because the formalities of invitation and acceptance had not yet been completed. These included Davis for Secretary of Labor, Hoover for Secretary of Commerce, and—a complete surprise—Edwin Denby of Detroit for Secretary of the Navy.

For reasons that are still not entirely clear, but probably because his appointment might make the cabinet seem too "political," Harding had decided to drop Hert. The last-minute substitute, Denby, was a Detroit lawyer, businessman, former congressman, and veteran of the Spanish American and World Wars. It was understood by reporters that his name had been suggested by Weeks, who had served with him in the House of Representatives.[13] Everything about Denby had seemed "right," the Michigan congressional delegation had given a hasty endorsement, and a telegram had been sent inviting Denby to come to St. Augustine.

Hoover Exacts Conditions

Through all the weeks of speculation and controversy over his appointment to the cabinet, Hoover had remained in New York, where he was running a European relief organization, and declined to comment. Since the Marion interview in which his availability for the cabinet and his interest in the Department of Commerce had been ascertained, he had heard nothing from Harding.[14] During the third week of February, as press reports came from St. Augustine that Harding was now firm in his intention to appoint Hoover, the latter publicly maintained that he knew nothing about it.[15] The newspapers, however, considered the appointment as a virtual certainty and speculated that Harding's public

[13] Mark Sullivan, "The Men of the Cabinet," *The World's Work*, Vol. 42 (May 1921), pp. 81-94. Mrs. Denby said in a letter to Ray Baker Harris, undated but apparently written after her husband's death, that she understood Weeks to have been responsible for the appointment. Harris collection of Harding materials, Library of Congress. *Cf.* Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 486, indicating that Lowden also knew and suggested Denby.

[14] Hoover, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[15] *New York Post* (Feb. 22, 1921).

need for a "disinfectant" after the Daugherty appointment had tipped the balance in Hoover's favor.

Judging from external events, Hoover became weary of being taken for granted and decided to make the most of Harding's need for him. On February 22, his associate at the European relief organization, George Barr Baker (whose office, it was noted, was next to Hoover's), issued a statement to the press: ". . . Mr. Hoover stated some time ago that he had no desire for public office and felt that he could be of greater public service outside than inside the Cabinet. His friends are advising him that the Department of Commerce offers no such field for constructive work as do the public institutions with which he is now associated."[16]

To this announcement there was an immediate reaction in St. Augustine. That evening Harding, after some difficulty, succeeded in reaching Hoover by telephone at the Metropolitan Opera House. Later that evening Hoover conceded that he had been offered the appointment and said that he had asked for time to consider the matter.

Two days later, Hoover sent Harding a telegram indicating the conditions on which he could accept:

> I told him [Harding] there were some ideas in my mind that he should consider before the matter was finally settled. I stated I was interested in the job of reconstruction and development in front of us; that for the Department to be of real service, I must have a voice on all important economic policies of the administration. I stated this would involve business, agriculture, labor, finance, and foreign affairs so far as they related to these problems. I stated that, if I accepted, I wanted it made clear to the other departments from the very beginning.[17]

Hoover told the press: "I have outlined to Senator Harding several constructive proposals . . . and it remains for him to make the decision."[18]

On February 24, Harding telephoned Hoover again and the two came to final agreement. The news was announced in both St. Augustine and New York. ". . . Senator Harding enters wholeheartedly into the plans for upbuilding the department, and wishes that I continue to direct the policies of the European relief," said Hoover. "If I take the post, it will

[16] *New York World* (Feb. 23, 1921).

[17] Hoover, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[18] The Department of Commerce, he amplified, was a department "in name only," being composed of "scientific and semi-scientific bureaus of uncorrelated nature." A reorganization was needed to "bring into the Department of Commerce bureaus which belong there." *New York Times* (Feb. 25, 1921).

be only because I believe that Senator Harding will stand behind me in making a real Department of Commerce."[19]

The New York newspapers applauded the decision, although the *Times* regretted a "trace of personal assertiveness" in the way Hoover had publicly pressed his advantage. In St. Augustine, Harding seemed somewhat discomfited by the episode but put the best face on it by stressing the desirability of coming to full understanding before appointments were made.[20] From Washington it was reported that Senators Jim Reed and Hiram Johnson were consulting William Randolph Hearst about launching a campaign to block Hoover's confirmation. Daugherty was on hand, however, taking preventive measures, and it did not appear that enough support could be obtained from the Republican old guard.[21] Hoover was already in Washington, consulting with the outgoing Secretary of Commerce about plans for administrative reorganization.

Edwin Denby arrived in St. Augustine on February 26. The following day, after several hours of discussion, Harding called in the reporters and made the official announcement that Denby was to be Secretary of the Navy. At the same time it was announced that Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., would follow in the footsteps of his father and his cousin Franklin as Assistant Secretary—a gesture toward the Bull Moose-Wood faction of the party. Denby appeared to be in a happy daze at unexpectedly receiving a post he had in no way sought. His combination of military, business, and political background, plus some experience in working with youth, made him seem an excellent choice.[22] Even Josephus Daniels seized an occasion to make a favorable comment about his prospective successor. Denby immediately responded with a telegram expressing his appreciation and indicating his desire to confer with Daniels as soon as he could get to Washington. Denby told reporters that he agreed with Harding on the importance of a strong Navy, and that he believed in the wisdom of Daniels' controversial order banning liquor aboard ship.[23]

[19] Washington *Evening Star* (Feb. 25, 1921).

[20] *New York Times* (Feb. 25, 26, 1921).

[21] Although in Daugherty's own account his "Hoover and Mellon or no Mellon" ultimatum was delivered on his previous visit to Washington, press reports indicate that it may have been on this occasion. *New York World* (Feb. 23, 1921).

[22] Denby had been a Navy enlisted man during the Spanish American War. Later he became a lawyer and was active in the automobile industry. He served briefly in Congress, from which he resigned in order to enter the Marines as a private, at age 47, in the World War. Later he was commissioned and discharged as a major. Returning to Detroit, he became chief probation officer for the Detroit courts, and was mentioned as a possible Republican candidate for Governor of Michigan.

[23] *New York Times* (Feb. 27, 1921).

The rest of the cabinet was by then well known, although still not officially announced. No more of the individuals appeared for conferences with the President-elect. Formal statements about the appointments were doled out to the press one or two at a time during the remaining days before inauguration. As expected, it was also announced that George Christian would become Secretary to the President and that Dr. Sawyer would be White House physician.

A Strong Cabinet

As finally completed, the cabinet was on the whole reassuring to those who had been afraid of Harding's political intentions and concerned about his ability to resist pressure. It appeared, after all, that he had done a reasonably good job of balancing the traditional requirements of ability, faction, geography, political obligation, and personal confidence.

In the context of the time, only Daugherty seemed a possibly unfit appointee, and the fuss over his appointment quickly died away. No one could muster much real indignation over Harding's desire to have at least one personal confidant in the cabinet. From Daugherty on, the cabinet looked good. Hughes was, to the public at large if not to old guard senators, eminent in ability and virtue. Hoover brought a tremendous public reputation, a touch of nonpartisanship, and, as one newspaper said, "a kind of glamour" to the cabinet.[24] The fact that Harding had recognized the ability of such men and successfully persisted in his desire to appoint them was given as evidence that he was not, after all, completely subservient to a Senate clique.

Harding had, to be sure, given way in the case of Mellon; Dawes would undoubtedly have been more popular. But the Mellon appointment seemed in no way inappropriate. While not well known to the public, Mellon had the confidence of the business world and the conservative Republicans in Congress. The newspaper publicity made him out as uncommonly able, almost a wizard of finance, and he had his millions as evidence that the stories might be true. The fact that he was identified with Pittsburgh, not Wall Street, helped make him publicly acceptable. Some reports described him as practically a shirtsleeved country banker.

Fall, Hays, and Weeks were recognized as political appointments in a more usual sense, but entirely creditable ones. Fall was a senator from

[24] *Ibid.* (Feb. 24, 1921).

the West, popular among his colleagues and with an as yet unblemished public reputation. Energetic Will Hays was receiving the natural reward for a man who had directed a successful campaign. Hays somehow always managed to diffuse over the harsh details of practical politics a glow of wholesome young Republicanism. He added real strength to the cabinet. Weeks was a politician but considered a hard working and able one, whose background combined several strands of eligibility.

Wallace was a farmer and a spokesman for farmers, his appointment a gesture toward the farm-based Republican insurgents of the West. Davis was a surprise, but he had a substantial personal following and was a plausible compromise between the preference of the labor leaders for one of their own men and the suggestions of conservative Republicans that a man from industrial management, who would know how to keep labor in its place, be appointed. Denby, the last-minute addition, seemed to have impressive qualifications.

The contemporary press portrayed Harding, and the public perceived him, as a man who had been in a difficult situation but had muddled his way to a reasonably successful conclusion, thus giving hope for the future. Mark Sullivan, for example, said:

> . . . Harding, as his position grew upon him, and as he rose to it, went through a process of growth readily apparent to those about him. He realized increasingly that his responsibility was less and less to his party and more to something broader. Out of that four months of growth there are at least two casualties, two men who, by every warm impulse of Harding's heart, were destined for the intimacy of his official family, but who fell outside as sacrifice to a newly elected President's increasing responsiveness to considerations other than personal.

Sullivan concluded that ". . . man-for-man comparison of Harding's Cabinet with previous Cabinets during the past twenty years, will usually result in the judgment that this is the best Cabinet we have had in that time."[25]

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Completing the cabinet was the principal but by no means the only activity at the Harding headquarters in St. Augustine in late February.

[25] *The World's Work* (May 1921), pp. 83-84, 92. The only possible equal, Sullivan thought, was during a brief period when Hay, Root, and Taft all ornamented the administration of Theodore Roosevelt.

Between other concerns, Harding conscientiously worked away on his inaugural address, apparently writing it all himself. According to one analyst, it was almost the last of Harding's major speeches that did not betray the ghost-writer's touch.[26]

Visitors, Visitors

The President-elect was almost overrun with visitors to his headquarters. A large number, of course, were personal friends and lesser politicians pressing for ambassadorships, subcabinet posts, and other patronage. Others were prominent men who came by invitation to present their views on various questions: Thomas W. Lamont, who had been in the American delegation at the Paris Conference, came to discuss the war debt problem. The President of the New York Central provided management's version of the railway labor problem. Other visitors, such as a delegation of German-Americans who waited on Harding, were not so welcome but could hardly be avoided. In retrospect it is difficult to see that these conferences had much plan or purpose, but they served to convey to the public an impression of a conscientious President-elect, friendly and available to all, informing himself about the nation's problems.

Congressional Relations

In absenting himself from Washington and formally abjuring legislative leadership prior to inauguration, Harding had both conformed to what were considered the proprieties of his situation and followed his preferences. By personal belief and party doctrine, he was committed to noninterference in the affairs of Congress, and to have interfered prior to his assumption of the Presidency would have been, in Harding's view, especially bad. Yet Harding had enough personal experience in Congress to know that the doctrine could not be carried to an extreme. He knew that on occasion Congress wanted and needed suggestions, if not guidance, from the executive, and he recognized the importance to him of what Congress might do prior to inauguration. During his visit to Washington in December, he had dropped several hints about what the legislative priorities might be. During his weeks in Marion, he was pre-

[26] Samuel Hopkins Adams, *Incredible Era: The Life and Times of Warren Gamaliel Harding* (1939), p. 221.

occupied with other things, and, although he received occasional reports from congressmen who came to see him, his role appears to have been a passive one. The houseboat cruise further disengaged him from the legislative process.

As Harding returned to St. Augustine in mid-February, the congressional session was getting to a critical stage. It was inevitable that legislative leaders should try to use his influence, if not actually seek his advice, and Harding was sufficiently aware of the realities of the situation to be concerned about what Congress was doing. Therefore, while not trying to assume real direction (How could he, after all, issue instructions to Henry Cabot Lodge?), and always conducting himself in a deferential manner, Harding became increasingly involved in legislative matters prior to inauguration.

One of Harding's first ventures was a message to the congressional leaders expressing his hope that the appropriation acts could be passed in the lame duck session and not carried over to the special session. While this was said to be "resented in some quarters in the Senate," those less concerned about legislative sensibilities applauded the step, noting that despite the "elaborately courteous and self-deprecatory" tone of the message, it showed "the ease with which he can assume leadership if he has the determination to do so."[27] About the same time, Harding wrote a well-publicized letter, which probably cost him no good will in Congress, expressing his disapproval of a pending House bill that would exempt Presidents from the income tax. A little later, as noted in a previous chapter, he came out in favor of the appropriation for the Navy shipbuilding program and against the Borah disarmament resolution.

In mid-February the legislative leaders consulted with Harding about the tariff problem. The emergency tariff bill passed by the House earlier in the session had now come back from the Senate so extensively amended that its original sponsors were uncertain whether to make the necessary compromises to get it passed or to allow the bill to die in conference. Chairman Joseph W. Fordney of the House Ways and Means Committee went to St. Augustine to see Harding. From their conferences emerged the general priorities for economic legislation in the forthcoming special session. It was agreed that the House leaders would try to compromise on the emergency tariff bill and get it passed for the record; this would be safe because Wilson would be almost certain to veto it. A new and different emergency tariff bill, perhaps along the

[27] *New York Post* (Feb. 15, 17, 1921).

lines of the Payne-Aldrich tariff of 1912, would have first priority in the special session. "I think it is imperative," said Harding, "for I don't believe the country can survive industrially under the Underwood Tariff law."[28] With the country's industrial future safeguarded by an emergency tariff, the Ways and Means Committee would turn to a tax cut. Finally, the committee would settle down to the time-consuming job of developing a wholly new and "scientific" tariff act that could stand permanently.

While Harding was winding up his affairs at St. Augustine, Daugherty hurried ahead to Washington for additional conferences with party leaders in Congress. His announced objective was to make plans for a series of discussions with legislative leaders, beginning after inauguration, to clarify the new administration's substantive policies and legislative program. Policy agreement, Daugherty indicated, would be the first priority; discussion of patronage would follow. The significance of the sequence was widely understood. ". . . Old political observers in Washington remarked grimly that Mr. Harding's plan of action shows that he 'knows the game.' There is nothing like an expectation of office to make a man warm to the legislative policies of the appointing power."[29]

Our America

Toward the end of his Florida stay, Harding made several public appearances and minor speeches. Although they were obviously not intended to be specific or definitive statements, their general tone suggested that Harding was edging away from the "association of nations" idea. To the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, he said: "I would rather have indissoluble ties of righteous trade promote international friendship than all the compacts ever written in the world." From the balcony of his hotel he told a crowd, in typical Harding language: "If there is any one thing more in my heart than another, it is that at the end of the coming administration there remains the America we inherited from the fathers, without the surrender of a single part. I wish for our America a soul truly American."[30]

[28] *New York Times* (Feb. 20, 1921).

[29] *Ibid.* (Feb. 26, 1921).

[30] Both speeches reported in the *New York Times* (Feb. 26, 1921). The *Times* editorial writer could not resist pointing out the inconsistency of the talk about trade and Harding's insistence on returning to a high tariff: "Touching are the high-protection romances." *Ibid.* (Feb. 28, 1921).

On February 27, the establishment at St. Augustine broke up, and Mr. and Mrs. Harding returned to Marion. On March 1, Harding had a conference with Leonard Wood, in which he offered Wood the post of Governor-General of the Philippines. The assignment was a logical one because of Wood's previous experience in Cuba and the Philippines, but it also had a political logic that did not escape Wood: most Republican leaders would be happy to see the ambitious general sent to the Philippines—or farther, if possible! Wood, who had set his heart on being Secretary of War, expressed his reluctance to take the post and no agreement was reached.

The remaining hours in Marion were occupied with personal affairs and send-off ceremonies. On the evening of March 2, the Hardings took the train to Washington. Normalcy was at hand.

CHAPTER 16

A NEW ADMINISTRATION INSTALLED

"It will be a great relief to the country to have the new administration installed and at work," commented a popular journal on the eve of Harding's inauguration. "Since the election in November, the Wilson administration has lingered on without prestige or influence. The whole governmental machinery has been marking time."[1]

The American economy also was marking time, and dragging the tempo at that. Farm prices sagged lower and lower, business was bad, and factory layoffs were spreading. Labor was restless and angry, threatening strikes if the wage cuts being discussed in several major industries were made. The outgoing administration had no easy remedies to propose. Treasury Secretary David F. Houston, its most influential policy maker on economic affairs, insisted that the postwar adjustments —regrettable but inevitable—would run their course in due time if the government let the economy alone and balanced its budget. Houston drafted a strong veto message for Wilson to use on the emergency tariff-boosting bill proposed by Congress.

Meanwhile the world moved on. With frequent regretful, backward glances at the United States, the other powers organized the League of Nations. Britain and France pressed Germany for an agreement on reparations and threatened to occupy additional territory if it did not come to terms. Wanting no reparations for itself, and having refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty, the United States stood aside. Apparently counting on indecision in Washington, Costa Rica precipitated border

[1] "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 63 (March 1921), p. 230.

skirmishes with Panama by forcibly occupying some disputed territory it had been awarded in an international arbitration proceeding several years before. The Secretary of State conferred with the ambassadors of Panama and Costa Rica and expressed his hope that there would not be a war, but it was reported that the State Department contemplated no action beyond gathering full information for the guidance of the incoming administration.[2]

Wilson's last days in the White House were uneventful. Only once did he lose his outward composure; the last cabinet meeting ended with Wilson and several others in tears. Wilson had one final benevolence at his disposal—a lifetime appointment, with no confirmation required, to the International Joint Commission on the Canadian boundary. After ascertaining that Tumulty preferred to take his chances in law practice, Wilson gave the sinecure to William B. Wilson, the hardworking, loyal, ex-miner who had served for eight years as Secretary of Labor. The President also surprised reporters with an announcement that as soon as his health permitted he would enter law partnership with his Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby—a hope that never materialized. Tumulty and the clerks worked overtime packing the presidential files to be removed from the White House on inauguration day. The usually reticent Charles Swem, Wilson's personal stenographer, told reporters: "Mr. Wilson has become boyish in the past few days. He is glad it is over."[3]

THE HARDING INAUGURATION

Arriving in Washington on the morning of March 3, the Hardings were greeted at the station by a committee of dignitaries and escorted to the Willard Hotel. The headquarters that Harry Daugherty had established there were already crowded with festive Republicans, many of them seeking office. The future cabinet members called on the President-elect and made visits to their departments. (Some of them had been having conversations with their predecessors for the past several days.) Washington had a holiday air, although the newspapers noted that the prospect of an inauguration without a parade and a public ball had kept the crowd of visitors somewhat smaller than usual.

The Republican National Committee met briefly that morning. Will

[2] *New York Times* (Feb. 28, 1921).
[3] *Ibid.* (Mar. 3, 1921).

Hays had already stated publicly that he intended to resign the chairmanship but not until several pending matters, particularly a problem about southern state representation at the next national convention, had been settled. There also was disagreement among the party leaders about who should succeed Hays. It was agreed to hold another meeting of the committee in May or June, at which time a subcommittee on the representation question would make a specific recommendation and a new chairman would be designated. Daugherty and John W. Weeks, who were understood to represent Harding's interests, made brief speeches, and the committee adjourned to permit the members to pay their respects to the President-elect.[4]

In the late afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Harding went to the White House to call on President and Mrs. Wilson. This was the first meeting of the President and President-elect since the election. The visit was brief and apparently confined to stiff social conversation and last-minute arrangements about the procedure for the following day. Wilson had rejected Dr. Grayson's advice and decided to make a final public appearance.

Inaugural Ceremonies

The next morning Wilson and Harding took the traditional ride up Pennsylvania Avenue.[5] Arriving at the Capitol they went to the President's Room in the Senate wing. For half an hour congressmen poured in and out, saying farewell to the President and greeting the President-elect. Wilson signed several bills and vetoed the Army appropriation bill. A committee headed by Wilson's bitter enemy appeared to inform the President that the Senate and House were prepared to adjourn and awaited his pleasure. Wilson said grimly, "Senator Lodge, I have no further communication to make. I thank you. Good morning."[6]

[4] *New York Times* (Mar. 2, 3, and 4, 1921). Hays' decision to withhold his resignation was apparently based both on his desire to straighten out the southern delegate problem—a perennial source of controversy and scandal in the party—and on the need to get a decision from Harding about the chairmanship. Both of these matters were settled in the next few weeks, and a successor to Hays was designated in June. *Ibid.* (June 8, 9, 1921).

[5] In view of questions of protocol that arose in later inaugurations, it may be worth noting what happened: Wilson waited in his second floor study until he was informed that the President-elect and the inaugural committee awaited his pleasure in the Blue Room. He went down to greet them, and the party then left for the Capitol. Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him* (1921), pp. 507-08.

[6] Suspicion of Wilson was so ingrained in some of the Republican senators that they could hardly believe he was preparing to exit quietly. They expected him to make a final dramatic gesture, such as sending the Versailles Treaty back to the Senate.

The clock struck twelve and the party in the President's Room broke up. Wilson apologized to Harding for his inability to participate in the remainder of the ceremonies, hobbled to an elevator, and left for the home he had purchased on S Street. Harding and Coolidge entered the Senate chamber where the members of Congress were waiting, together with the incoming and outgoing cabinets, the Supreme Court, the leading military officers, the diplomatic corps, and other dignitaries. Vice President Marshall made a brief valedictory speech and declared the Sixty-sixth Congress adjourned. Coolidge took the oath of office, called the Senate to order for a special executive session of the Sixty-seventh Congress, and made a short inaugural speech. New members of the Senate were sworn in. Then the Senate recessed and all moved to the East Portico.

With his hand on the passage, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," Warren G. Harding became President of the United States.

A Call to Normalcy

President Harding's inaugural address was essentially a reiteration of familiar themes from the Republican campaign. Like most inaugural addresses, it did little to reduce the new administration's intentions to specific proposals.[7]

Harding did not mention the League of Nations by name, but his words implied, if not a complete rejection of that organization, an adherence only with extreme reservations. America, he said, would always be ready to associate with other nations for purposes of conciliation, mediation, and counsel that might lead to disarmament. It would also look favorably on a world court with jurisdiction to be mutually agreed upon. However, ". . . America can be a party to no permanent military alliance. It can enter into no political commitments, nor assume any economic obligation or subject our decisions to any other than our own sovereignty. . . . We will accept no responsibility except as our own conscience and judgment, in each instance, may determine."

In the section on domestic affairs, Harding struck his real keynote: "Our supreme task is the resumption of our onward, normal way." This

[7] A technical "first": Harding spoke into a device called a microphone and his voice was amplified so that it was audible to the entire crowd assembled in Capitol Plaza.

included reduction in taxation and government expenditure, sound commercial practices and adequate credit, and "sympathetic concern" for agriculture. He also spoke ". . . for the omission of unnecessary interference of government with business, for an end to government's experiment in business, and for more efficient business in government administration." The attention to business must be tempered with "a mindfulness of the human side of all activities." While guarding against "ill-considered remedies," steps should be taken to mitigate the less desirable consequences of industrialism.

Harding's reference to the tariff was in familiar terms: "It has been proven again and again that we cannot, while throwing our markets open to the world, maintain American standards of living and opportunity and hold our industrial eminence in such unequal competition." But in the same paragraph he said: "We know full well we cannot sell where we do not buy and we cannot sell successfully where we do not carry." The latter apparently referred to his well-known interest in aid to merchant shipping.

The new President expressed concern about excessive immigration and internal revolutionary agitation. "I wish for an America no less alert in guarding against dangers from within than it is watchful against enemies from without." He closed by dedicating himself and his administration to service of the popular will. "Service is the supreme commitment of life. I would rejoice to acclaim the era of the golden rule and crown it with the autocracy of service."[8]

On completion of his address, Harding made an innovation in inauguration day procedure. Instead of leaving immediately for the White House, he returned to the Senate chamber. Vice President Coolidge called the Senate to order and Harding read a short message nominating the members of his cabinet. The President then was escorted down Pennsylvania Avenue by a troop of cavalry—a remnant of the parade that had been sacrificed in the name of Republican economy.

At the White House there was the usual inauguration day luncheon for the family and close friends of the incoming President. In the afternoon Harding received officials of the new administration, prominent visitors to Washington, and personal friends, including a large delegation from Marion. Seeing a crowd gathered on Pennsylvania Avenue, Harding ordered the gates opened, making the White House grounds

[8] *New York Times* (Mar. 5, 1921).

available to the public for the first time since 1917. That evening the Edward McLeans and other socialites entertained at private balls, but the President did not leave the White House. The next morning's newspapers reported that there had been a friendly game of bridge in the Red Room.

INSTALLING THE DEPARTMENT HEADS

The Senate wasted no time over the nominations Harding had announced. As soon as he departed, the nominations were referred to the appropriate committees and instantly reported out again. Favorable committee reports had been prepared and signed in advance. The confirmations were by voice vote, and the whole thing was done in a matter of minutes. The only delay was caused by a few moments of fun at the expense of Albert Fall, who was made to lay his resignation on the table in the presence of his colleagues before they would confirm him for an executive office.

In a fitting gesture, Andrew Mellon immediately withdrew to the office of his congressional sponsor, Senator Philander C. Knox, and was sworn in as Secretary of the Treasury. His colleagues waited until the following day, when there were ceremonies of various degrees of formality in the departments. The affair at the Department of State was appropriately solemn for the importance of the department, the dignity of the surroundings, and the mien of the incoming Secretary. At the Department of Commerce, Herbert Hoover took office in a matter-of-fact way. Commenting that since 98 per cent of the personnel were under civil service, the department "does not need to meet any anxiety on the part of office seekers," he plunged into work. At the War Department, outgoing Secretary Newton D. Baker presented about a thousand officers to their new chief, John W. Weeks. Weeks then withdrew for a private conference with the Chief of Staff and the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee on what to do about the Army promotion lists that the Senate had rejected. Probably the largest, and certainly the most exuberant, affair was at the Department of Justice, where Harry Daugherty triumphantly took the oath in the presence of a crowd of visiting Ohioans and other political and personal friends, including the actress Lillian Russell, who bestowed a congratulatory kiss on the new department head.

In all the departments, the retiring secretaries attended the swearing in of their successors. Relations between the new and old officials were apparently polite and friendly and in a few cases cordial. Several of the incoming officials had been in the city for several days in advance, conferring with officials of their departments and studying materials placed at their disposal; all got at least a few hours of consultation with their predecessors just before or just after inauguration day. While these introductions to new duties could hardly be called adequate, they were moderate improvements over the hasty departmental transitions of 1913.

THE NEW REGIME AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Inauguration day brought an immediate change at the White House, as Harding installed staff members of his own choice and made well-publicized changes in the conduct both of the domestic establishment and of the presidential offices.

Swem, Tumulty, and two of the latter's assistants were gone. Into these vacancies Harding moved the key members of the staff that had been assembled at Marion during the campaign. The Harding staff was slightly larger and more specialized in its assignments than the Wilson staff, which had revolved around man-of-all-work Tumulty. George Christian, Jr., Harding's assistant for the past several years, inherited Tumulty's title as Secretary to the President, if not the scope of his duties. William Hard, former secretary of the Ohio state Republican committee, became appointments secretary. James Sloan, a former member of the Secret Service, was available for a variety of confidential political and personal assignments. And Judson Welliver, an experienced Washington correspondent, became the President's ghost writer and adviser on press relations.[9] Since the war had broken down the bar against

[9] Welliver's connection with the White House received so little attention in the various newspaper stories about the Harding staff that one is led to the conclusion that Welliver's former colleagues were protecting his anonymity. He did not function openly as buffer between President and the reporters, as present-day press secretaries do, but remained behind the scenes. His biography in *Who Was Who* does not mention press relations, simply recording that he was "attached to the White House organization in a confidential capacity" during the Harding and Coolidge administrations. One of his duties apparently was to produce magazine articles about the accomplishments of the administration, which were printed without any identification of the author's White House connection. For example, "Mr. Harding as President-Elect," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 63 (March 1921), pp. 259-64; "Dawes: Banker, Brigadier, Budgeteer," *Ibid.*, Vol. 64 (August 1921), pp. 157-60.

females in the presidential offices, two women secretaries were also transferred to the White House from Marion. A young man from Marion who had done well in the Army was brought in as military aide, and Dr. Charles Sawyer of Marion was commissioned a reserve brigadier general in the Army medical corps and ordered to active duty at the White House in place of Admiral Cary Grayson. These personal choices of Harding's were made without disturbance to the permanent administrative and clerical staff of the White House. Executive Clerk Rudolph Forster, his assistant Maurice Latta, and several others whose services far antedated the Wilson administration continued as before. On the domestic side, Irwin (Ike) Hoover continued as head usher, and Mrs. Helen Jaffray, who had been given her notice by Mrs. Harding in December, was eventually retained as head housekeeper.

Wilson from his first days in the White House had been jealous of his own time and personal privacy, slightly removed from contact with ordinary officialdom and the press, and available to the public only on a few occasions of his own choosing. After the death of the first Mrs. Wilson he withdrew even further, and when the war came, access to the White House grounds was restricted for security reasons. After Wilson became ill in 1919, he was seen only by members of his personal staff and by a few of the highest officials on the most important business. Social activity at the White House virtually ceased. The President and his family were usually described as cold, remote, and uninterested in normal human beings. The conduct of the White House in Wilson's later years did nothing to counteract the charges of his opponents that he was haughty, self-centered, and dictatorial.

Harding's order that the White House grounds be opened to the public on inauguration day symbolized the series of changes that followed. The gates remained open; citizens could walk or even drive their cars through the grounds. The first floor rooms at the White House again became almost public rooms, requiring only a congressman's courtesy card for admission. Continuing a custom begun at Marion, Harding held a daily one o'clock reception for visiting delegations and almost anyone who turned up with nominal credentials and some excuse to shake hands with the President. At Easter time the traditional egg rolling on the White House lawn was revived. An Airedale, Laddie Boy, was installed as the presidential pet. Such events were reported in detail by the press, emphasizing to all that tensions were relaxed and "just folks" were in the White House.

CHAPTER 17

SOME MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

Before considering Harding's efforts as a legislative leader and his impact on foreign affairs, it is appropriate to examine some of the administrative aspects of the Wilson-Harding transition. Of interest are the sharp change in administrative philosophy and methods, the activities of the new administration in the field of personnel, and its efforts to carry through some badly needed reorganizations and other administrative reforms.

THE HARDING WAY

Harding's personal inclinations, augmented perhaps by the "new broom" psychology of the situation, led to striking departures from the presidential administrative practices of Wilson. Wilson as chief executive had been relatively inaccessible, apparently not much interested in administration as such, indifferent to large areas of government activity he regarded as of secondary importance, but quick to assert leadership on matters he considered significant. Harding, along with most other Republicans of his time, talked a great deal about systematic, businesslike methods and appeared to spend far more time than Wilson on managerial matters. But while Harding was extensively involved, and frequently bogged down, in daily administrative routine, larger matters were never brought under his control.[1]

[1] Nicholas Murray Butler tells of arriving at the White House late one afternoon and finding Harding still at his desk, struggling with a huge pile of correspondence.

For example, Wilson's first public statement from the White House had been an announcement that since he proposed to save his time for important things, job-seekers would not be welcome at his office. Harding, by contrast, at first emphasized his availability. Job-hunters and their sponsors, politicians, and officials on all sorts of business crowded the offices in the west wing. Harding saw as many people as he could, but his appointment schedules ran far behind. By the end of his first month, there were signs of tightening up on appointments, and as the administration settled down, the situation was gradually brought under partial control. However, Harding's genuine friendliness and misplaced conscientiousness about this particular aspect of his job kept him burdened with appointments much of his time in the White House.[2]

Harding and the Press

Continuing the easy habits developed at Marion, when Harding had dropped into the press room almost daily to borrow a chew of tobacco and swap stories with reporters, the press enjoyed free access to Harding at the White House. The regular press conferences that had been started and later dropped by Wilson were immediately resumed on a twice-weekly basis. At first, Harding engaged in give-and-take with reporters on any and all subjects. In November 1921, after an episode in which he got beyond his depth on a question of foreign policy and seriously embarrassed Hughes in some delicate negotiations, the rule was established that only questions submitted in writing in advance would be answered. However, the reporters continued to have unprecedented access to the President and his staff, and Harding's off-the-record candor was repaid by stories that emphasized the favorable news and the pleasant aspects of the President's personality while dealing gently with his errors and inadequacies.

Harding and His Cabinet

It was natural for Harding, in view of his Whig-Republican theory

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Butler inquired what some of the letters were about and, on finding out, told Harding it was ridiculous: even a university president did not have to handle such petty matters. Completely dejected, Harding said: "I suppose so, but I am not fit for this office and should never have been here." Nicholas Murray Butler, *Across the Busy Years*, Vol. 1 (1939), p. 401.

[2] For reports of the pressure of visitors in the early days, see Washington *Evening Star* (Mar. 10, 1921); Washington *Sunday Star* (Mar. 27, 1921).

of the Presidency and his modest assessment of his own abilities, to stress his intention to make the cabinet an important feature of his administration. Most Republicans, and many Democrats as well, thought that Wilson had debased a fine institution. Harding approached the White House with a vision of himself as the dignified chairman of a council of wise men, calmly discussing great issues and coming to harmonious agreement on policies. Policies having been agreed on, each cabinet member would proceed in his own way, without interference from the President, to do his share in their administration.[3] Quite naturally, there was much fanfare for Harding's first cabinet meeting four days after inauguration. Special attention was given to the fact that the President's desire to have the Vice President meet regularly with the cabinet was prevailing over Mr. Coolidge's publicized modesty.

Some of Harding's expectations about the cabinet were, indeed, fulfilled. He presided over its meetings with grave earnestness. Toward individual members, particularly such clearly identified Best Minds as Hoover, Hughes, and Mellon, he was always deferential. Most of the time, the individual members were given the lead on policy matters in their respective fields, and Harding rarely raised questions about the administration of their departments. However, the idea of the cabinet as a council for free exchange of ideas, leading to agreed-upon administration policy, quickly went the way of all such dreams. Some of the members, such as Hughes, took the President's intentions for the cabinet seriously at first and in the early meetings spoke candidly and in some detail of problems and activities in their departments. Despite an agreement at the first meeting that cabinet proceedings would be secret, the gist of such discussions inevitably began leaking to the press, and most of the members soon reserved their important business for private conferences with the President. Free discussion was further in-

[3] A recent student of the cabinet comments: "If the Wilson and Harding viewpoints do not represent wholly divergent interpretations of the Presidency, they do stress entirely different aspects of it. The one view looks toward a full realization of the potentialities of the Presidency for leadership; the other view deliberately underplays these possibilities. An emphasis on the Cabinet is often associated with that set of attitudes and beliefs which minimize strong executive leadership. Individuals of this persuasion are apt to accent 'the men around me' or 'the best minds,' to the relative detraction of the presidential office itself. Indeed, the historical reactions to positive presidential activity have been paralleled in most cases by assertions of devotion to the Cabinet. Self-reliant Presidents are often followed by Presidents proclaiming their Cabinet-reliance. The Whig theory of the Presidency may have as its corollary a Whig theory of the Cabinet—a relationship which did, in fact, hold for the Whigs, and seems to be evident in such sequences as the Wilson-Harding. . . ." Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "The President's Cabinet" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1956), p. 147.

hibited by the tensions that developed within the official family. Hughes resented Fall's intrusions on policy toward Mexico. Wallace bristled at Fall's attempts to get control of the Forest Service and battled with Hoover for predominance on policies affecting agricultural prices. Hughes and Hoover distrusted Daugherty and attacked his policy on antilabor injunctions. Harding's conduct of cabinet meetings did little to resolve such controversies; he could offer only ineffectual good will. The Vice President attended regularly, listened, and rarely spoke. Cabinet meetings became increasingly short and inconsequential.[4]

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

Harding and his associates, like all administrations brought to power by party overturns, spent a great deal of time on personnel matters during their first few months in office. Most obvious and urgent was the task of filling the leading political offices with Harding appointees. Closely related was the problem of distributing the lesser patronage at the disposal of the administration and the incoming party. Another important cluster of problems involved the career service. It was necessary for the new administration to make adjustments and arrive at working arrangements with the leading career officials, to mediate between the competing claims of politics and merit along the boundaries of the career system, and to face some long-deferred managerial problems in the area of civil service classification and salaries. The record of 1921 in the field of federal personnel illustrates the crosscurrents of personal favoritism, systematic party patronage, legislative intervention, and managerial reform that swirled through the Harding administration.

Top Level Vacancies

As of March 4, the personnel situation in the upper levels of the government urgently required presidential attention. Between Wilson's failure to make nominations to fill vacancies near the end of his term and the refusal of the Senate to confirm most of the nominations that

[4] Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 2 (1952), pp. 45-46, 109-11; Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes,* Vol. 2 (1952), pp. 427-28; Claude M. Fuess, *Calvin Coolidge* (1940), pp. 288-89; Russell Lord, *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947), pp. 219, 221-23, 227, 235.

were made, about fifty high political positions were vacant as the Harding administration took over. The positions included assistant secretaries, bureau chiefs, members of important boards and commissions, and several top diplomatic posts abroad. Some agencies, such as the War Shipping Board, were left practically headless as Wilson's recess appointments expired. In addition to the actual vacancies, about fifty more officials in such positions had submitted their resignations to Harding and expected to be replaced quickly, making a total of about one hundred important appointments required before the government could operate in a normal manner.

Assignments to some of these posts had been decided incidental to the discussions on the cabinet. Harding plunged into negotiations on the remainder, and for several weeks after March 4 he put in long hours interviewing prospects for office and their various sponsors, consulting the appropriate department heads, and negotiating with the individuals and groups presumed to have interests in the posts being filled. After eight years out of power, Republican pressure for these offices was bound to be intense. Harding invited its full force by emphasizing his availability for consultation, particularly to his former colleagues in Congress, and by his obvious desire to placate most Republican factions.[5]

No single principle seems to have guided the disposition of these posts. The largest portion went in traditional fashion as rewards for campaign services rendered, with some apparent effort at apportionment among geographic sections and recognition of victories won in particularly crucial states. A few appointments were purely personal benevolences of the President. However, the new cabinet members had a great deal to say about appointments in their respective bailiwicks, and many of the nominations reflected the predilections of the department head rather than of the President and his staff. Only in a few cases were department heads given subordinates they clearly would rather not have had.

[5] Writing after Harding's death, George Christian noted that Harding's policy was to let the department heads handle most of the discussions leading to nominations in their departments, but this policy could not always be enforced. "A President cannot call men from all parts of the country during the time between his nomination and his election, seek their advice, their counsel, their service, their cooperation in his personal behalf and in behalf of the party, and again seek their aid in March to help and to assist him in keeping his promises to his constituency, and also tell them, in the same breath, to see the Secretary of War, the Attorney-General and the Postmaster-General about a presidential nomination. . . ." George B. Christian, Jr., "Why Presidents Break," *Saturday Evening Post,* Vol. 196 (Oct. 13, 1923), pp. 3-4, 165-66, 169-70, at p. 165.

The turnover of subcabinet positions and other offices at that level began immediately after inauguration day. The Senate received and confirmed several nominations each working day from March 5 to 15, when it recessed until the special legislative session began on April 11. Nominations went up in a steady stream during the remainder of April, and by the end of that month most of the important vacancies had been filled.

Subcabinet Turnover

In terms of the experience of the past, the turnover in the leading departmental posts was handled relatively smoothly. While the work of most departments undoubtedly suffered from the wholesale replacements within a short period of time, the turnover was in most cases handled so as to cushion the shock and avoid long gaps in official tenure. Only one or two of the assistant secretaries departed abruptly on inauguration day; most of them remained on hand to assist the new department heads during their first days in office and to consult with their successors when they appeared.

Some departments made substantial use of these holdovers. As already noted, the incoming administration prevailed on the Republicans in the Senate on the eve of inauguration day to confirm the long-pending nomination of Norman H. Davis as Undersecretary of State and delegate to the International Communications Conference. Although he turned the undersecretaryship over to a successor four days later, Davis remained at the department until mid-March and then went to Geneva for several weeks to continue negotiations on ocean cable rights and other complicated matters that he had been handling.[6]

At the Treasury Department, only one of the four assistant secretaries left as of inauguration day. The names of the other three incumbents, who had never been confirmed, were promptly resubmitted and confirmed at Mellon's request. Displaying indifference to—or perhaps merely inexperience in—partisan politics, Mellon went out of his way in his first press interview to express his appreciation for Secretary Houston's courtesy and the excellent condition in which he had left the

[6] Continuity was also enhanced at the Department of State by the fact that Second Assistant Secretary A. A. Adee and Director of the Consular Service Wilbur J. Carr were retained in the posts in which Bryan had found them in 1913.

department.[7] He also depended largely on the holdover assistant secretaries to inform him about the department's business. His first public statement, describing the state of the government's finances and tentative plans for new Treasury issues, was frankly based on a memorandum prepared for Mellon's information by one of the assistant secretaries, S. Parker Gilbert.[8] Gilbert made himself so useful that he was not only retained in the department but was promoted to Undersecretary when that office was created later in 1921. The other two holdovers remained at the Treasury until April and May, respectively.

A holdover officer was also fully used at the Department of Agriculture. Assistant Secretary Elmer D. Ball, a former land grant college dean who had been brought into the department by the Democrats despite the fact that his personal politics were Republican, went out of office on inauguration day but was renominated at Secretary Wallace's request. Ball held the post for several months and then relinquished it to take another position in the department more in line with his scientific and technical interests.[9]

Even Harry Daugherty, partisan as he was, took his time about "Republicanizing" the Department of Justice. He installed his own immediate assistants right after inauguration day, but the Solicitor General, second ranking official in the department, was not replaced until July. The several assistant attorneys general who headed the functional divisions of the department were replaced one at a time over a period of about six months.

In some cases where subcabinet turnover was prompt, there were other circumstances to mitigate the shock. Although Secretary Hughes had replaced the Undersecretary and the first and third assistant secretaries of state by the end of March, the new selections were all men with long diplomatic experience and familiarity with the ways of the department. Secretary of War John W. Weeks, who replaced the assistant secretary promptly, had been studying the problems of the department and conferring with his predecessor for several weeks before inauguration day

[7] *New York Post* (Mar. 10, 1921). It should be noted that the whole top echelon of the department had been reconstructed since Houston, who was both conservative and relatively indifferent to party matters, had taken over early in 1920. The Republican impact would undoubtedly have been greater had they taken over the department from a controversial Democrat like William G. McAdoo.

[8] *Ibid.* See also *New York Times* (Mar. 9, 1921).

[9] Arthur W. Macmahon and John D. Millett, *Federal Administrators* (1939), p. 214.

and was presumably in good command of the situation. Edwin Denby, who was designated for Secretary of the Navy only ten days before inauguration, managed to spend a good deal of time with Josephus Daniels before and after March 4. Assistant Secretary Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who took over promptly on March 9, had been tentatively designated and preparing himself long before Denby's selection. At the Department of the Interior, Secretary Fall let the first assistant go shortly after March 4. The replacement, however, was a man who had been assistant to the secretary in the Taft administration and waited out the Wilson years in the backwaters of the department.[10]

The impact of change at the subcabinet level was probably sharpest at the Post Office, where during March and April Will Hays replaced four assistant secretaries—one of them a career man in the department—with essentially political appointees.[11] Change was also abrupt at the Department of Labor, where Assistant Secretary Louis F. Post, a controversial figure who had fought to soften the effects of Attorney General Palmer's policy of deportation for "red" immigrants, was let go immediately on inauguration day. The new Secretary and the Assistant Secretary of Labor both assumed office with little previous experience or briefing from their predecessors.

The Civil Service and The Patronage

Even before all of the high level vacancies were filled, Harding began to make routine patronage appointments. Unlike Wilson, who had avoided serious discussion of the subject as long as possible, Harding and his associates overtly and intensively discussed appointments with congressmen and other party leaders from election day onward, establishing the rules under which the lesser patronage would be divided. Always eager to be helpful in such matters, Congress extracted from the Civil Service Commission and published a list of the positions not subject to

[10] This was Edward C. Finney, a remarkable example of the career political administrator, who managed to survive three party overturns, the Ballinger scandals, and the Teapot Dome exposures for a total of 39 years in the department.

[11] Even here there was continuity in the retention of such persons as Joseph Stewart, who had been made Second Assistant by Roosevelt, retained by Taft and Wilson, and then appointed special assistant to the Attorney General, on detail to the Post Office and actually carrying a heavy administrative burden there. (Macmahon and Millett, *op. cit.*, p. 37.) Hays also found in the department and made a confidential assistant in his own office a young man named Ebert K. Burlew, who was to have a noteworthy administrative career in the Post Office and Interior departments under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

competitive examination.[12] With the groundwork thus laid, patronage activities went smoothly in the early weeks of the new administration, causing neither public nor intraparty controversy of any significance.

Federal civil employment, in early 1921, stood at a little over 600,000. This was about 100,000 employees above the prewar figure but sharply down from a wartime high of slightly over 900,000. Seventy-five per cent of these civil servants were classified competitive employees under the merit system, fairly well protected against political removal.[13] The remaining 150,000 jobs were in various unclassified, noncompetitive, and exempt categories, many but not all of them available for Republican patronage.

Between 15,000 and 16,000 of the noncompetitive positions were in the "presidential" class, *i.e.*, filled by presidential nomination and Senate confirmation. However, 14,000 of these were postmaster positions that had been put partially on a merit basis by an Executive Order of President Wilson in 1917. Of the remainder, over 500 were diplomatic and consular posts filled by initial competitive examination and in-service promotion thereafter despite the formality of presidential nomination. Many other posts in the presidential class were either so minor as to have little political significance or technical and not really available to political appointees. Excluding the postmasters, there were between 1,000 and 1,200 patronage positions of some political significance in the presidential class. Over half of these were in public lands, customs, internal revenue, and other local offices traditionally influenced more by congressmen than by the President. There were at most 500 positions, divided more or less equally between important political appointments and minor patronage, over which Harding himself had substantial—but by no means complete —control. Many of these positions were filled for specific terms and thus not immediately available. As of inauguration day, Harding had about one hundred major and one hundred minor jobs at his disposal.[14]

The approximately 135,000 noncompetitive jobs below the presidential class encompassed a great variety of positions including unclassified

[12] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *General Information in Regard to the United States Civil Service including List of Civil Service Employees in the Various Departments of the Government and List of Positions not Subject to Competitive Civil Service Examinations,* House Committee on Reform in the Civil Service, 66 Cong. 3 sess. (1921).

[13] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1922,* p. vii.

[14] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *History of the Federal Civil Service* (1941); Lewis Mayers, *The Federal Service* (1922); *New York Times* (Mar. 5, 1921).

laborers, specialized or technical positions for which it was impractical to give examinations, confidential clerks and assistants to high executive officials, and miscellaneous positions "exempt" for obviously political reasons. It is impossible to determine how much patronage this represented. In some of these positions, political replacements on a change of administration were routine. In others, vacancies might be filled by political methods, but a tradition of long tenure gave informal protection to incumbents. The special or technical nature of other posts in this group gave both partial protection against political removal and reasonable assurance of appointment on some sort of merit basis.[15] However, there was no effective legal protection against political removal for employees in the noncompetitive categories, and the amount of patronage that could be squeezed out depended essentially on the attitudes of the various appointing department heads.[16]

Patronage Theory and Practice

Despite the importance that Harding ascribed to patronage, his theory about how political appointments should be made minimized the role of the President. He believed, as most legislators did, that federal positions in the field service should be controlled by the congressmen and other party leaders from the states where the jobs were. He had no thought of upsetting the tradition that collectors of customs and internal revenue, prohibition enforcement officers, and federal district attorneys and marshals were at the disposal of the senators, while the post offices were the particular patronage of members of the House. The congressmen presumably would consult the national committeemen and other state party officials, and in the absence of an appropriate Republican congressman, the state organizations would make their recommendations directly to the department concerned. The department head would make the appointment, or, if the position was filled by presidential nomination, would pass the recommendation on to the President.[17] The department head

[15] Mayers, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. Mayers, whose study was published in 1922 but was based on prewar statistics, did not hazard an estimate of the number of jobs effectively on a patronage basis. The present writer, from bits and pieces of information in Mayers and other sources, presumes that the total was somewhere in the neighborhood of 50,000, but the figure is speculative at best.

[17] Christian, *op. cit.*, gives a relatively full account of the Harding patronage procedures.

and the President would screen the recommendations and settle any disputes, but the primary responsibility for the appointments lay on the political sponsors.[18]

Congressmen and party officials were also expected to make recommendations about patronage jobs in the departments at Washington, but these positions were recognized as being different from the field positions. Here the responsibility lay specifically on the department heads. While they were encouraged to play the patronage game, both by Harding's attitude and by the necessities of getting along with Congress, Harding would not order them to do so. He recognized that substantial control by department heads over their immediate subordinates was an essential corollary of his theory of administration by the department heads, not the President.

A third kind of patronage, distinguished from both the domestic field service and departmental positions in Washington, consisted of the appointments to regulatory commissions and other independent agencies in Washington and to offices outside the United States, including the principal embassies and legations and the governors of the territories. These positions pertained to no particular state and the responsibility of any department head was, at most, indirect. Such positions were presidential patronage.

Before inauguration, Daugherty had dropped hints that Harding intended to refrain from filling vacancies and making patronage appointments until he was assured of legislative support in the special session of Congress. This was recognized as the standard presidential tactic, which even Wilson had to some extent employed. Whether Harding actually had such an intention is unknown, but the record contains little evidence that the strategy was followed. Harding was still too much the senator at heart to be able to use tough executive methods. Besides, he clearly regarded the filling of government positions with Republicans as one of the main purposes for which he had been elected. He might be baffled by the complexities of taxation or foreign policy, but the distribution of offices was an aspect of politics he appreciated and thought he understood. He enjoyed making appointments, and his policy of being available to congressmen at all times, plus his inherent eagerness to please,

[18] "The Senators will be made to understand that if they recommend men who prove to be unworthy or lack the ability to perform the duties of the offices to which they are appointed, the President will place upon them the responsibility for whatever trouble arises through this means." *New York Times* (Mar. 9, 1921).

made it virtually impossible for him to resist when importuned to fill vacancies. Appointments of postmasters, collectors of customs, and collectors of internal revenue began to be made toward the end of April and continued steadily during the following weeks.

As time went by, exceptions and operational difficulties in Harding's patronage theory began to appear. One important exception arose from the fact that Harding's party regularity was modified by his feeling that whatever else might be denied a President, he at least ought to be able to take care of his own friends. He persistently intervened in the normal processes of political appointment to find places for individuals to whom he was bound by ties of long association, affection, and personal obligation.[19] All Presidents of course do this on occasion; the differences are in the extent and selectivity with which they do it. Harding was apparently incapable of distinguishing between the standards appropriate for strictly personal appointments in his own entourage, for high-ranking but traditional patronage posts well-insulated against the vagaries of transient incumbents, and for really important posts with exacting technical or managerial responsibilities. It was one thing to appoint his secretary, his military aide, and the White House physician from among his hometown friends. It was another thing to spend such important patronage as Director of the Mint and Comptroller of the Currency on Ohio friends with neither political nor technical qualifications. It was still another thing to amend the civil service regulations in order to appoint his brother-in-law (a former missionary) Superintendent of Prisons, or to appoint another personal friend as head of the rapidly expanding Veterans Bureau. Unfortunate as some of these appointments eventually turned out to be, they attracted little attention in the spring of 1921. When they were noticed at all, they were described with tolerant amusement as foibles of the warm-hearted, intensely human President it was such a relief to have.

Whether by accident or design, the cabinet members most interested in spoils were assigned to the departments where most of the potential spoils were, but occasional difficulties arose from the widely divergent attitudes toward patronage and the merit system held by the various department

[19] This was not as inconsistent with party regularity as it might at first glance seem. Most party organization men of Harding's day were willing to grant their colleagues some latitude to use appointments for private purposes. Such deviations became sinful only when used systematically to encourage party irregulars, build up a personal organization within the party, or impress a particular view on the party as a whole. Harding's deviations were not of that character.

heads. Fall and Daugherty systematically exploited the patronage at their disposal, although Daugherty was occasionally suspected—not altogether unreasonably—of using the Department of Justice patronage to develop a personal organization and undermine the established leaders in some states. Mellon was relatively indifferent to patronage. While he allowed others in his department wide latitude in dispensing it, there were still complaints from Republican organization men that not enough Democrats had been removed. National Party Chairman Hays surprised and alarmed his fellow professionals by announcing his belief in the widest possible application of the merit system in the Post Office and acting as if he meant it. He undertook a vigorous campaign to "humanize the Post Office" and improve the employee relations that had deteriorated badly under Albert S. Burleson. Such merit-minded individuals as Hughes, Hoover, and Wallace had relatively few jobs at their disposal and were so sticky about dispensing them that they frequently incurred congressional displeasure.

Such difficulties, however, were relatively minor and slow to appear. With only a few ripples, the easily available patronage was systematically dispensed during the spring of 1921. While it eventually appeared that there had been a substantial turnover in the positions not subject to competitive examination, the job was done smoothly. Looking back to the old days, editors congratulated the Harding administration for the moderation with which it was proceeding.[20]

Pressure on the Merit System

Although the Republican platform had pledged that "the civil service law shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable," it became apparent early in the administration that the positions outside the civil service and openly available for patronage would not be enough to satisfy the party. There were demands from congressmen and others that the cover of civil service be rolled back.

[20] "Even when we had only a tithe of the present number of federal civil servants, Washington used to be thronged by thousands of office-seekers and their friends; and a new President was hounded almost to death by ravenous hordes of place hunters. In like manner, every Cabinet officer was under terrific siege. We are bound to have a good many changes; but we have not been witnessing anything disgraceful during recent weeks, in the way of wholesale political patronage. The new administration has not encouraged the 'spoils' seekers. On the contrary, the heads of departments have been thoughtful for efficiency and for the good of the country." "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 63 (May 1921), p. 461.

The most exposed salient of the merit system contained 14,000 first, second, and third class postmasters. By law, these officers were nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. For many years they had been the principal patronage available to members of the House of Representatives. The law also provided for four-year terms, thus guaranteeing every administration a chance to fill every post office.[21] President Wilson, however, had undercut the system with an executive order promulgated in March 1917, shortly after his re-election, directing that on the occurrence of a vacancy in any of these offices due to death, resignation, or removal of the incumbent, the Civil Service Commission was to give a competitive examination for the position. The person ranking highest on the examination would be certified to the Postmaster General and, if he met the requirements of residence and character, would be recommended to the President, who would nominate him to the Senate. The order did not specify what was to be done about vacancies due to expiration of statutory terms, but it was announced that the intent of the administration was to reappoint satisfactory incumbents. Thus with competitive examinations, certification by the "rule of one," and probability of reappointment, the foundation of a career system for postmasters was laid. The order was, of course, controversial, but from all indications it was administered in reasonably good faith during the Wilson administration. The Senate had grumbled but, perhaps comforted by the thought that it was only the House patronage that was being cut, had confirmed the nominations made under the procedure as long as the Democrats controlled the Senate.[22] After 1919 there had been few confirmations, and about 3,500 of these positions were vacant at the end of the Wilson administration.

From election day onward there were predictions from Republican politicians that the new administration would rescind Wilson's order. On March 1, 1921, the question was discussed in the Senate. Democrats cited the results of a survey showing that the new postmasters appointed by this procedure were about evenly divided between the two major parties, thus demonstrating the impartiality of the Wilson administration.[23] Senator Lodge rose to point out that the survey counted

[21] A disproportionate number of these terms always expired in the first year of an administration, due to the cumulative effect of vacancies kept open during the latter years of a given administration by various congressional devices so that the next administration could promptly fill them.

[22] Mayers, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31.

[23] Outside the South, Republican appointees were said to outnumber Democrats; in

only the *new* appointees. The fact was that most of the men being *reappointed* were Democratic patronage appointees from the early years of the Wilson administration, who were now being promised successive terms under the guise of a humbug merit system. Oscar Underwood asserted that the merit system had always grown by covering in incumbents, regardless of their origins. Senator Hitchcock, the Democratic floor leader, defended the merit idea but dropped a hint to the Republicans about a possibly acceptable compromise. He thought the rule of one unduly binding on the President. Perhaps the order could be modified to provide that the Civil Service Commission furnish a list of eligibles among whom the administration could choose.[24]

Civil Service reformers pleaded for no change in the system, but the pressure on the administration was too great to be withstood, even had there been a desire to do so. Will Hays announced that while he was a firm believer in civil service, this was "sham civil service."[25] The outcome was a new executive order, issued on May 10, 1921, requiring any vacancies in first, second, or third class postmasters to be filled either by promoting from the classified civil service or by giving a new competitive examination. A postmaster appointed from the classified service or originally qualifying through examination was eligible for successive terms without further examination. However, when examinations were given, the Civil Service Commission was to certify not one but three eligibles to the Postmaster General.[26]

The new order was described by the administration as a tightening of civil service standards. In truth it did close some small loopholes, but it had the effect of opening larger ones. It opened up to competition the offices to which Wilson's original political appointees had been promised reappointment for satisfactory service. But the Postmaster General now could take his choice of three eligibles in making his recommendation to the President. During the following year, 5,800 new postmasters were nominated after examination.[27] With advice from Republican congressmen, Mr. Hays and his successors were able in most cases to find a suitable Republican among the top three.

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traditionally Republican Massachusetts, for example, 20 out of 28 appointees were Republicans.

[24] *Congressional Record,* Vol. 60, pt. 4, pp. 4109-13.

[25] William H. Crawford, "A Skeptic's Day in Will Hay's Office," *The World's Work,* Vol. 42 (July 1921), p. 231.

[26] Mayers, *op. cit.,* p. 132n.

[27] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . .* 1922, p. xxvi.

Just as the Democrats had done in 1913, the Republicans took care that any major blocks of new positions established would be exempt from competitive examination. The principal example was the Veterans Bureau, which was created early in 1921 by merging parts of several other agencies. A rapid increase in personnel was authorized, free of civil service restrictions.

The modification of the postmaster selection procedure and other "adjustments" made in the early months of the new administration temporarily mollified patronage-minded Republicans but provided a relatively small number of jobs. The total federal payroll continued to decline under the pressure of a Republican economy drive and as the remnants of war agencies were liquidated. The moderation with which the administration was said to be approaching the patronage problem did not reassure the organization men.

By the summer of 1921, there were strong complaints about the scarcity of jobs. In July, Harding appointed a former governor of New Hampshire, who was considered a lukewarm friend of the merit system, to be chairman of the Civil Service Commission, but this had no immediate effect.[28] In October, Senator Davis Elkins told reporters as he left the White House:

> I told the President that the Republicans in my state were expressing impatience and disappointment that so little progress has been made during the last eight months in calling to the support of the Administration men loyal to it and in full sympathy with it.
>
> A large majority of the key positions in the government, and a still larger number of positions under them, are held by "deserving democrats"; appointed under the two Wilson administrations, because of their activity in the Democratic organization, rather than because of any merit outside that one consideration. . . . It is high time the Republican leaders take account of the situation.[29]

Much of the criticism was based frankly on belief in the old-fashioned spoils system, but some of it took a relatively sophisticated form. Alderfer notes:

> It was argued that the people had decreed a change of administration and policy in the 1920 elections. Therefore, the incoming administration

[28] The individual was John H. Bartlett. A year later he left the commission to become First Assistant Postmaster General, a post traditionally associated with patronage. One of his first acts after that was to make a speech to the Civil Service Reform League, accusing it of pushing the merit system too far and too fast. Harold F. Alderfer, "The Personality and Politics of Warren G. Harding" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1928), pp. 213-14.

[29] *New York Times* (Oct. 15, 1921), cited by Alderfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-28.

should be surrounded by its friends and those in harmony with its program. Certain "key positions" in the departments should be filled with Republicans in order to effectively carry out Republican policy. Many of these key positions were under classified civil service and were occupied by Democrats who were trained in a Democratic administration. Consequently, the new executives were unable to function properly with such subordinates.[30]

"Hardingizing" the Treasury

Republican organization men were especially irked that the Treasury, with its rich patronage resources in the customs, internal revenue, and prohibition enforcement services, was not being fully exploited. In December 1921, Elmer Dover was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. Originally from Ohio, Dover had managed the Harding campaign activities on the West Coast, where he now lived. Previously, he had been secretary to Mark Hanna and secretary to the Republican National Committee. He was an intimate of Harding and Daugherty and had spent a considerable amount of time in Marion in the pre-inaugural period. Dover was rumored to have been the White House preferred candidate for Chairman of the Republican National Committee to succeed Hays, but he lost out when Hays insisted on promoting the previous Vice Chairman. Now, with a sneer at Hays and his talk of "humanizing the Post Office," Dover said he was being appointed to "Hardingize the Treasury."[31]

Dover lost no time. One of his first acts was to "investigate and reorganize" the customs valuation staff in New York. As a result, the head of the staff, considered an outstanding expert, was fired, and his staff was scattered and replaced by political appointees. In January 1922, Dover obtained a special executive order from the President removing five deputy commissioners of internal revenue from the competitive service, and another order appointing a specified individual, former clerk to an Ohio congressman, head of the customs division in the Treasury, without reference to the civil service regulations.

An even more flagrant invasion of the merit system occurred on March 31, 1922, when Dover obtained an executive order "reorganizing" the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Giving as reason "the good of the service," the order dismissed the chief and assistant chief of the bureau

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[31] This section on Dover's activities at the Treasury is based primarily on Alderfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-203.

and replaced them by other named individuals. The order further provided that the next 27 top jobs comprising the division chiefs and directors of the various technical activities of the bureau, were to be abolished and the incumbents dismissed. In place of the abolished positions, a list of "new" positions with similar but slightly different titles was established, to be filled by the chief of the bureau at his discretion.[32]

This patronage grab caused an immediate uproar in the press and on the Democratic side in Congress. The Civil Service Reform League called a protest meeting in Washington to denounce the administration.[33] But Dover, undaunted, sharpened his hatchet for an assault on the Bureau of Internal Revenue. However, he and the chief of the bureau, also a Harding appointee, did not see eye to eye. When Dover tried to fire some of his employees, the bureau chief protested to Secretary Mellon and was sustained. In the next round of firings at the Treasury, some men considered protégés of Dover were let out. The Ohio congressional delegation sent a joint letter to the President, expressing regret at the removal of one of them. Representative James T. Begg of Ohio, in an effort to generate support for Dover, sent to Republican congressmen a list of 150 men in the Bureau of Internal Revenue who had been marked for removal. This leaked to the press, and Mellon repudiated it. Begg circulated and took to the President a petition from Republican congressmen, expressing appreciation for the great work Dover was doing. However, the combination of adverse publicity and a firm stand on the part of Mellon was too much for Harding. Dover was allowed to resign in July 1922.

Dover's activities were the high point of the drive against the merit system in the upper levels of the federal service. While minor irregularities continued to occur and full advantage was taken in several of the departments of all possible discretion that could be justified under the civil service laws and regulations, there were no further major incidents. Heavy Republican losses in the congressional elections that fall were interpreted by some party sources as evidence that the administration had not been militant enough in that respect,[34] but there was not a great

[32] Text of the order in U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1922,* p. 127.

[33] Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (1958), p. 288.

[34] The *National Republican,* a partisan journal, speaking of "taxeaters inherited from the Democratic era," suspected that "Their continuance in office with opportunity to block any program of economy and efficiency had something to do with the strength mustered by anti-Republican forces. . . ." Quoted by Alderfer, *op. cit.,* pp. 226-27.

deal more that could be done without stirring up more trouble of the Dover variety. In the first year and a half of the Harding administration, as a result of liquidation of the remainder of the war agencies and the Republican economy drive, federal employment was reduced from 600,000 to 550,000, a level that was maintained with only slight variations for the remainder of the 1920's. The proportion of employees subject to examination remained constant at 75 per cent.[35]

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

It is common for a new President to re-examine the administrative machinery he inherits from his predecessor and seek changes in organization or procedure. Sometimes such changes appear to be almost random responses to a "new broom" psychological climate; in other cases, the changes have special significance for the achievement of the new administration's substantive program; and in still other cases, the changes are significant administrative reforms that have long been prevented by legislative, bureaucratic, or other resistances. There was something of all three situations in the early administrative activity of the Harding regime.

At the opening of the Harding administration, there seemed to be both need and opportunity for important administrative reforms. Throughout the two Wilson administrations, the exigencies of New Freedom legislation and one foreign policy crisis after another had engaged the President's attention. Reforms that had been discussed and reasonably well agreed on in the Roosevelt and Taft administrations were still pending. After the war there was a strong feeling, not only in the public at large but in Congress and among administrative officials as well, that the government had become complicated, cumbersome, inefficient, and—by prewar standards at least—terribly expensive. Economy, efficiency, and reorganization were powerful themes of the campaign of 1920. While they mainly benefited the Republicans, who blamed Wilson for all that might be wrong with the government, many Democrats also

[35] Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 289, concludes that the public service probably suffered less from legislative intervention under Harding than it had under Wilson. This was partly because of growing public support for the merit system, partly because the Republican party was prosperous and had less need for patronage, and partly because Harding had no legislative program that stimulated him to bargain with congressmen.

talked about the need for administrative overhauling.[36] A decade of activity at such centers as the Institute for Government Research had developed a self-confident corps of experts whose concepts and terminology had been spread throughout the government community. Publicity given to wartime technological achievements had given the people great faith in engineers and "efficiency experts," of whom Herbert Hoover was a shining example. The Republican platform, Harding's campaign speeches, his inaugural address—all promised great things after March 4. Harding further emphasized the issue by making a speech on this subject to the Academy of Political Science in New York on May 23.[37] The newspapers gave prominent publicity to every preparatory step and rumor of imminent action.

As it turned out, the Harding administration was deeply involved in administrative matters during its first few months. In one field, where the needed reforms were fairly clear-cut and hard-driving leadership happened to be at hand, important accomplishments resulted. In other areas, the reform drive bogged down for lack of leadership and because it encountered underlying conflicts between the executive branch and Congress.

Reorganization

The favorite administrative idea of 1921 was reorganization: to shuffle and consolidate functions, bureaus, and agencies to eliminate duplication of effort and provide a rational and coherent administrative structure. Indeed, it was easy to see a need for major efforts of this sort. Rapid expansion of government since the turn of the century had resulted in seemingly haphazard addition of functions and agencies here and there in the administrative structure. Washington was still strewn with the hulks of war agencies that needed either to be liquidated or put on some sort of a permanent basis. Experts had explored the system and documented many cases of duplication of effort, failure to coordinate, and other apparent irrationalities. The idea of reorganization touched

[36] Typical campaign literature is Warren G. Harding, "Less Government in Business and More Business in Government," *The World's Work,* Vol. 41 (November 1920), pp. 25-27; Franklin D. Roosevelt (as reported by Donald Wilhelm), "Can the Vice President Be Useful?" *Saturday Evening Post,* Vol. 193 (Oct. 16, 1920), pp. 8, 81-82.

[37] "Business in Government and the Problem of Governmental Reorganization for Greater Efficiency," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science,* Vol. 9 (July 1921), pp. 49-103. This same volume also included "papers" (actually redrafts of speeches given elsewhere) on the same subject by Hays, Hoover, and Smoot.

the imagination, and experts and laymen alike sketched boxes on charts and produced ambitious plans for eliminating the sprawl and grouping related functions under new headings. The potential savings, it was claimed, were immense.

In one important area the administration moved quickly. When he nominated Dr. Sawyer as a brigadier general, Harding announced that in addition to serving as White House physician, Sawyer would make a survey of government activities in the health, education, and social welfare fields and advise him about the feasibility of establishing a new federal department in this area. Harding had previously mentioned this possibility on several occasions. Sawyer began to bustle about Washington, and it soon became as apparent to him as it was to almost everyone else that the most pressing questions concerned the provision of hospital and other services to veterans.

On March 29, Harding appointed a commission of prominent citizens to make a study and recommendation on the organization of veterans services. To head this commission, he appointed the man who had almost become Secretary of the Treasury, Charles G. Dawes. Arriving in Washington a day or two later, Dawes discovered that some members of the commission, as well as the bureau that was to provide it with staff and services, were laying plans for a study to last six or seven months. "Well, I am not going to be here even six or seven days," he announced. Quickly assembling the members of the commission, he summoned the representatives of veterans and other interested organizations to submit their recommendations—in no more than fifteen minutes each. On April 7, a report recommending consolidation of the insurance, hospitalization, and other veterans benefit programs into a single agency was submitted, and Dawes was on his way back to Chicago. Legislation was put through Congress, and on August 9 the Veterans Bureau was established. Harding's friend Charles Forbes became head of the new agency.[38]

The reorganization of veterans services was hailed as merely a token of greater things to come. As it turned out, it was about the most important reorganization accomplished by the Harding administration. Talking about reorganization proved much easier than carrying it out, particularly when Congress was involved.

[38] The good Dr. Sawyer continued to have a vague roving commission in the health and welfare fields. Little came of his activities until a year and a half later, when he reported to Daugherty that Forbes had corrupt relationships with contractors building veterans hospitals—a charge that proved spectacularly true.

In December 1920, Senator Reed Smoot of Utah had taken the lead in establishing a special Joint Committee on Reorganization with a broad mandate to produce a plan for a full-scale administrative reorganization. At least once before inauguration and several times shortly afterward, Harding and Smoot discussed how they would proceed. Harding, of course, wanted to cooperate with Congress, but even such upholders of the legislative viewpoint as he and Smoot could see that the executive branch had an interest in reorganization plans. They worked out an interesting agreement to enlarge the membership of the Joint Committee by adding one member, not a member of Congress, to be named by the President, who could consult with the committee on behalf of the executive. Walter F. Brown, a prominent Harding supporter from Ohio, who was in line for some sort of office, was named to the committee and elected its chairman.

The Institute for Government Research and other organizations immediately laid before the committee comprehensive plans for revamping the executive branch, but the members decided not to proceed until they had the recommendations of the administration. Brown discussed the problem with members of the cabinet, and while the impression of great things afoot was sustained throughout the summer of 1921, the difficulties gradually became apparent. Members of the cabinet coveted bureaus from other departments but objected to relinquishing any of their own. Employees of the bureaus in question sounded the alarm among their favorite interest groups and friends in Congress, despite threats from Brown and the White House.[39] Finally, in January 1922, some confidential plans for major reorganization were submitted to the President by the Joint Committee. Over a year later, in February 1923, the administration responded with its own comprehensive plan. Harding frankly admitted that difficulty in reconciling members of the administration had caused the delay. The difficulty was understandable in view of the fact that the proposals included such recommendations as unification of the armed forces in a Department of National Defense, transfer of all nonmilitary functions (such as the Army Engineer Corps) from the Army and Navy to civilian agencies, establishment of a Department of

[39] "It was very plainly asserted by Mr. Brown last month that the work of the commission was encountering adverse propaganda on the part of certain public employees, who are opposed to changes which may displace officials in certain bureaus. The President has checked this selfish opposition by threatening summary removal from office." "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 64 (July 1921), p. 18. The report that opposition had been checked was, of course, premature.

Education and Welfare, elimination of many nonfiscal functions from the Treasury, and attachment of many of the independent establishments to cabinet departments. A later study commented, "Nothing resulted from these recommendations, although the matter continued to be discussed."[40]

While reorganization on a grand scale failed, there were a few minor achievements, mostly confined to single departments. Frustrated in his efforts to add bureaus from other departments to the Department of Commerce, Hoover proceeded to shake up its personnel and make the most of what he had. On March 19, he appointed an advisory committee of leaders from business, agriculture, and labor to advise him on expanding the functions of the department. Over the next several years he gradually built up its services to business. Finding that the chiefs of five of his eight bureaus were "politicians, strangers to the real problems," Hoover replaced them with men promoted from the bureau staffs. He also took steps to tighten the supervision of the bureaus by the Secretary's office. When Congress would not provide funds for an expanded staff in his office, Hoover hired two secretaries and three personal assistants at his own expense.[41]

Albert Fall likewise carried out a few minor reorganizations. Shortly after taking office, he mentioned to Secretary Denby that the Interior Department's general responsibility for minerals made it the logical agency to administer the Navy's oil reserve lands. He had the necessary papers prepared, and on May 31, 1921, Harding signed an executive order to that effect.

Reclassification

Paralleling the feeble efforts of Congress and the Harding administration to achieve major structural reorganization of the executive branch

[40] Lewis Meriam and Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *Reorganization of the National Government* (1939), p. 185. The preceding discussion of the Harding reorganization efforts is based on Lloyd M. Short, *The Development of National Administrative Organization in the United States* (1923), pp. 460-70; W. F. Willoughby, *Principles of Public Administration* (1927), pp. 98-101.

[41] Hoover, *Memoirs,* p. 42. Hoover also alleged that ". . . the previous Democratic administration had removed certain branches from Civil Service by Presidential order and after having appointed good Democrats, then had blanketed them back under the Civil Service again by another Presidential order. I got President Harding to remove them again from the Civil Service and had the Civil Service Commission select their successors. Many of the previous staff failed even to pass the examinations." *Ibid.,* pp. 42-43.

were efforts to achieve long-needed reforms in a related and even more complicated field—personnel classification. For almost twenty years there had been concern about wide discrepancies in job titles, duties, and compensation in the various federal agencies. The titles by which employees were carried on the rolls often bore little relation to their duties, and from agency to agency—even within the same agency—there were often gross inequities in pay. A number of temporary expedients adopted in wartime added to the hodge-podge. Virtually everyone connected with the government agreed that something should be done, but this problem, like so many others, had been ignored during the decline of the second Wilson administration. Harding found it rapidly coming to a head in the spring of 1921.

The inherently complicated problem was made even worse by the existence of several different schemes for solving it. The Bureau of Efficiency had one plan, which was favored by Senator Smoot and others. A congressional Joint Commission on Reclassification of Salaries had produced another plan, which had its adherents. Several bills were introduced in the Senate when the special session convened in April 1921, and a fight immediately began over committee jurisdiction; Smoot wanted the legislation controlled by his appropriations committee, while proponents of the other scheme, backed by the employee unions, wanted the bills referred to the civil service committee. Both sides sought Harding's blessing, but he was unprepared to deal with the question. The jurisdictional issue was finally compromised in Congress, and several members of the cabinet fumbled their way through hearings on the complicated matter during May.

Congress bogged down and could not produce legislation. In an effort to cut the knot, Harding signed an executive order in October 1921, establishing a set of job titles and duties based on the plan of the Bureau of Efficiency. However, Congress effectively nullified it by refusing to vote the salary appropriations for the subsequent fiscal year on the basis of the new classifications. The matter dragged on through 1922 and was not finally settled until a compromise was worked out and ratified in the Classification Act of March 4, 1923.[42]

[42] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *History of the Federal Civil Service,* pp. 108-10; U. S. Civil Service Commission, "History of Position-Classification and Salary Standardization in the Federal Service" (mimeo., compiled by Ismar Baruch, 1941).

The Budget

In contrast to its failure to deal effectively with the reorganization and reclassification issues, the Harding administration achieved a major success in the budgetary field.

President Taft's proposal for a national budget system, based on the work of his Commission on Economy and Efficiency, had been defeated by congressional opposition near the end of his term, but the defeat proved only temporary. Reformers and experts on public administration continued to develop plans and urge budgetary reform. Their ideas were adopted in several states with apparent success, and Congress began to reflect the increasing public support for a federal budget system. By 1919, most congressional leaders, and President Wilson as well, were urging legislation. A comprehensive bill was passed in May 1920, only to be vetoed by Wilson on a point of constitutional interpretation: he called its provision for a Comptroller General appointed but not removable by the President a violation of the principle of separation of powers.

Both party platforms in 1920 endorsed the budget idea. After Harding's election, with congressional leaders continuing to advocate the reform, legislation was virtually assured.[43] Harding asked for it indirectly in his inaugural address and specifically in his message opening the special session of Congress on April 12. A new bill was put through quickly. Harding signed it on June 10.

The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 still stands as a major landmark in the development of the American administrative system. Its essential features were to provide for a comprehensive budget, including both expenditure and revenue proposals, to be prepared under the direction of the President. No longer could separate agencies submit uncoordinated requests directly to Congress. To aid the President, the act

[43] Jesse Burkhead, *Government Budgeting* (1956), pp. 25-29. Burkhead points out the changing source of support for a budget system. The earlier proposals had originated with scholars and reformers who, while not oblivious to the benefits of economy, had been mainly interested in centering responsibility and control in the chief executive to counteract the centrifugal tendencies of federal bureaus and congressional committees. By 1920, the leadership in the budget movement had been seized by congressmen and conservatives from the business world who were primarily interested in cutting down expenditures, balancing income and outgo, and achieving a tax cut.

provided for a Director of the Budget with wide power over financial and other administrative matters. Although formally in the Treasury Department, the Bureau of the Budget was to be directly responsible to the President.[44] The authority to audit expenditures and settle accounts, which previously had been lodged in the Treasury Department, was assigned to a new General Accounting Office, headed by a Comptroller General. Harding had overlooked Wilson's veto and agreed to have this official report to and be removable by Congress.

As soon as the law was passed, Harding called Dawes to Washington to become Director of the Budget. Dawes arrived on June 23 and immediately exploded into action. The act called for the first budget under the new procedure to be presented to Congress in December 1921, as the budget for the fiscal year 1922-23. This was moving much too slowly for Dawes, who persuaded Harding to undertake an emergency effort to put into budgetary form, and sharply reduce if possible, the proposed expenditure under the appropriations already voted for the 1921-22 fiscal year. It was an ambitious undertaking in view of the fact that Dawes had no organization and the new fiscal year would open in less than a week.

At Dawes's suggestion, Harding assembled, on June 29, all of the cabinet members and subcabinet officers, heads of independent agencies, bureau chiefs, assistant bureau chiefs, and chief clerks of the government for "the first business conference of the entire governmental administration."[45] Harding spoke briefly of the importance of economy, presented Dawes, and emphasized that his efforts would have full White House

[44] The decision to adopt this form of organization, which turned out to be of great importance for the future development of the administrative system, appears to have been related in part to the appointment of Dawes. Dawes always said in later years that he had turned down Harding's offer to make him Secretary of the Treasury because he thought the prospect of becoming Director of the Budget more appealing. However, at the time Dawes was under consideration for Secretary of the Treasury, it was not even certain that there would be such a post as Director of the Budget. In fact, the most recent version of the budget bill, the one vetoed by Wilson, had given the budget-making function to the Secretary of the Treasury, *ex officio*. This was the form of organization preferred by the Senate, which had prevailed over the preference of the House leaders for a budget bureau reporting directly to the President. W. F. Willoughby, *The National Budget System* (1927), pp. 29-33. In the circumstances, it is a reasonable hypothesis that Harding committed himself to back the House version in the new Congress in order to establish a post suitable for Dawes—and possibly promised Dawes that he would do so back in December when he found it necessary to change his mind and give the Treasury post to Mellon.

[45] Charles G. Dawes, *The First Year of the Budget of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1923), p. 7.

support. Dawes elaborated his concept of the role of the Budget Bureau in the government. He skillfully disarmed the department officers by insisting that the Budget Bureau would be "purely a business organization," with no interest in policy and no intention of interfering in the normal relations between the President and the department heads. However, he drove home the point that in his sphere the Director of the Budget operated with the full authority of the President, and that his requests for information and cooperation must not be denied by any officer or employee of the government. He climaxed his remarks with a dramatic appeal for his audience to join him in a pledge to the President to produce a budget within thirty days and "to do our part in helping you to lift the burden of taxation from the backs of the people by a reduction in the cost of government." Whatever private reservations his hearers may individually have had, all rose and cheered.

Two days later Dawes called together the newly designated budget officers of the federal agencies to receive the blessing of the President and detailed instructions from himself. With the aid of a crew of volunteers from the business world and several old A.E.F. associates borrowed from the Army, Dawes slashed away at departmental estimates and bulldozed cabinet members. By mid-July, Dawes reported to the President a reduction in proposed expenditures of $112 million, out of appropriations totaling slightly over $4.5 billion. In August the administration reported to Congress reductions of $350 million, and promised to keep cutting. The President's first regular budget message, submitted on December 5, 1921, estimated expenditures for the 1921-22 fiscal year at slightly under $4 billion, which was a half billion under the original appropriations and over $1.5 billion less than the actual expenditures had been in 1920-21. For the 1922-23 fiscal year, expenditures of only $3.5 billion were proposed. These goals were eventually substantially achieved. The combined effects of postwar reductions begun under the Democrats, further retrenchments at the initiative of the Harding administration, and savings squeezed out by the Dawes budgetary methods produced a dramatic drop in government expenditures.[46]

During the year that he served as Director of the Budget, Dawes pursued economy and business methods. Interdepartmental coordinating committees on various aspects of purchasing, supply, transportation, and

[46] Dawes, *ibid.* p. 238, estimated that $250 million had been saved by his methods of control and coordination alone.

use of surplus property were established. A second meeting of the cabinet and other principal officials, now referred to as "the Business Organization of the Government," was assembled in February 1922, to receive congratulations from President Harding and another harangue from Dawes.[47] Organizations known as "federal business associations," consisting of the leading federal officials in the locality, were set up in various cities. Special orders, such as the One Per Cent Club and the Loyal Order of Woodpeckers, were established to honor employees who had contributed notably to economy.

There was more to Dawes than retrenchment and showmanship. He worked incessantly to establish the authority of the Budget Bureau and what he considered sound precedents of relationships between himself and the President, the Secretary of the Treasury, the department heads, and Congress. He had many clashes with other agencies, particularly recalcitrant bureau chiefs, and in practically all cases got Harding's full backing.[48] Before he designated his successor and left the government in June 1922, Dawes had established the Bureau of the Budget as a going concern, with momentum and a characteristic approach that endured for a decade. In so doing, he contributed more than he could possibly have realized to the course of events in subsequent transitions.

[47] Dawes startled the cabinet members by waving two brooms, apparently almost identical, and accused the Navy of purchasing 18,000 of them when it could have had 350,000 out of Army surplus for nothing.

[48] In return Dawes frequently recorded, both in public and in the privacy of his diary, his respect for the President's ability. "It is always with a feeling of confidence and certainty that I come away from an interview with the President. The longer I come in contact with him, the more I am coming to understand that it is unnecessary to demonstrate business axioms to him. Given a state of facts, his business judgment is unerring." *Ibid.*, p. 60 (entry of August 10, 1921).

"My personal and official association with President Harding is a delight to me. His mind is quick as lightning. I have 'cut down' on my advice and put more steam into gathering facts. If I don't volunteer the advice before I present the facts, he 'beats me to it' every time." *Ibid.*, p. 69 (entry of August 19, 1921).

CHAPTER 18

TRANSITION IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

American foreign policy had been almost at a standstill for over a year when the Harding administration took office. At the center of everything was the issue of ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, which included the League of Nations Covenant. Despite rejection of the treaty by the Senate, Wilson had refused to retreat or present alternatives, choosing to hold his ground pending the "solemn referendum" of the 1920 elections. The task of American diplomacy was to maintain the status quo until a policy was established—a task that became increasingly difficult as the months passed and problems accumulated. Waiting for something to happen, the State Department at home was somnolent.[1]

After the election there was time only for superficial tidying. The main responsibility for putting American foreign relations in postwar order remained for the new administration. But what would be the nature of those relations? Inauguration day found President Harding with an internationalist Secretary of State, to whom he had promised a free hand, but with political and personal commitments to isolationists in

[1] Joseph C. Grew, then Minister to Denmark, returned to his post in December 1920, after a visit to Washington. He recorded:

"But there is little incentive for initiative just now: the Department seems to take no interest; we never receive comments on our work and many of our questions go unanswered. When in Washington, I brought up some of these questions, but nobody seemed to know or care anything about them, and the only constructive criticism I received was: 'Don't send in too much stuff.' Let us hope that things will be different after March 4th and that we will have a reorganized Department, thirsting for information, which it will be a pleasure to supply knowing that it will be appreciated and put to use. . . ." Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era,* Vol. 1 (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), p. 425.

the Senate. In his inaugural address, as before, he avoided embracing the League but reiterated willingness to "associate with other nations" under appropriate conditions. The American public, and foreign offices all over the world, waited anxiously for some clear sign of Harding's intentions.

A BRISK BEGINNING

The growing suspicion that Harding really had no policy except to muddle through with the least possible political trouble was partly dissipated by the vigor and skill with which the new administration took over foreign affairs from its predecessors and began making decisions on its own account.

Hughes and the Department of State

As already noted, Charles Evans Hughes arrived in Washington well before inauguration day for a series of conferences with the outgoing officials. He expressed publicly his appreciation and approval of the steps that had been taken to clarify the record and hedge the American negotiating position until the new administration could assert itself. Several high-ranking officials who symbolized the institutional continuity of the department were retained; a few others were replaced, but with men who had substantial diplomatic experience. Below the subcabinet level there were only a few personnel changes. A civil service reformer of long standing, Hughes accepted the career men on their own terms as politically neutral professionals and quickly won their loyalty. Keeping a tight rein on the department, he tolerated little political interference with the staff.[2] The diplomatic and consular career services overseas were secure in his care.

Despite his lack of specific experience in foreign affairs, Hughes appeared at the outset to be remarkably well informed. He ordered a systematic review of the status of all important matters pending in the department and impressed the staff by the rapidity with which he grasped

[2] "Some of the President's senatorial friends put him under pressure to set up in the State Department a sort of watchdog to look out for their political interests, but Hughes would have none of it, and Harding did not press his request." Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes*, Vol. 2 (1952), p. 413.

situations and mastered the details. By the force of his leadership, and by simultaneously reassuring the staff about its status and demanding a higher quality of work, he soon had the department operating at an unprecedented level of efficiency.

Hughes got off to an unpleasant start with the press when he scolded reporters for printing the texts of some of his first diplomatic notes before they were delivered. He announced that from then on, news from the department must come through the Undersecretary or himself. However, he recovered the esteem of reporters by the lucidity and candor with which he responded to questions in his daily press conferences and was soon admired as much by the press as he was by the members of the department. As a result, the remarkably smooth transition at the State Department was widely publicized.

No Nonsense in Central America

The Harding administration was confronted, from its first day in office, with substantive matters of foreign policy requiring prompt decisions. As of inauguration day, for example, there was a serious threat of war in Central America between Panama and Costa Rica. These two countries had been quarreling for many years over the precise location of their common boundary.[3] Under a treaty of 1910, they had agreed to submit the remaining difference in arbitration before the Chief Justice of the United States. But when Chief Justice White produced a decision in 1914, Panama had refused to accept it. After seven more years of argument, Costa Rica, in February 1921, seized part of the disputed territory. Panamanian forces promptly recaptured the region. Costa Rica mustered its forces, and the two armies began skirmishing along the border.

Besides being a general threat to peace in Central America, the affair created special problems for the United States. On the one hand, Chief Justice White's participation seemed to give the United States some kind of moral, if not legal, obligation to see that his decision was not flouted. On the other hand, the events of history had made the United States the sponsor of the Republic of Panama, and its overriding interest in protecting the Canal had led to treaty obligations guaranteeing the independence of Panama and (by implication) its territorial integrity.

When the fighting began, Secretary of State Colby expressed concern

[3] Graham H. Stuart, *Latin America and the United States*, 2d ed. (1928), pp. 329-32.

about the situation but indicated his reluctance to take specific action that might commit or embarrass the incoming administration. On February 28, 1921, American diplomats in Panama and Costa Rica were advised to take the line that the United States could see little purpose in a formal proffer of good offices, since that could lead only to another arbitration of a matter that had already been twice arbitrated. It was the opinion of the State Department that ". . . both Panama and Costa Rica should desist from hostile demonstrations or armed activities, and thus afford an opportunity for a discussion and agreement as to the manner in which the terms of Chief Justice White's award shall be applied. . . ." To this advice the two hostile governments made equivocal responses and seemed to be moving rapidly toward war.[4]

On the day before inauguration, the Panama-Costa Rica problem was one of the principal subjects discussed at a long conference between Colby, Norman Davis, Hughes, and the prospective Undersecretary, Henry P. Fletcher. Apparently, the incoming officials approved—or perhaps even suggested—a greater commitment than Colby previously had been willing to make, because that night dispatches went from Colby to the minister in Panama and the chargé in Costa Rica, instructing them to urge the two governments to hold their troops on their respective sides of a designated line. If this were done, the United States would be glad to undertake to recommend a means of reaching a final solution. It was again stated that any solution suggested would be in terms of carrying out the White award. By this time, however, Costa Rican troops were crossing the border in a sector where the boundary was not presumably in dispute. In the afternoon of inauguration day, Panama inquired how the United States was going to fulfill its treaty obligation to guarantee Panama's independence.[5]

As soon as he was sworn into office the next morning, Secretary Hughes moved to deal with the situation. He consulted Norman Davis, the new Secretaries of War and Navy, and President Harding. That evening he sent notes to the two countries, urging them in even stronger terms than Colby had used to observe the suggested cease-fire. This was backed by the ominous statement that warships were being sent to pro-

[4] U. S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921*, Vol. 1 (1936), pp. 175, 176-77. Volumes in this series will be cited hereafter as *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921*.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 177-79, 180-81.

tect American lives and property. It was explained at the department that the new position was merely an extension of the previous policy. American diplomats in the two countries were specifically assured that settlement in terms of the White award remained the objective.[6] This cease-fire request was honored by both sides, although Panama warned that it was making no concession about the disputed territory.

The American press congratulated the new administration for its success in winning the cease-fire, but Hughes was not content to let the matter rest. On March 15, he made a formal response to Panama's note calling attention to the treaty obligations of the United States. Reviewing the matter in detail, he concluded that the 1910 arbitration treaty had been a valid one and that Panama should abide by its results. Any guarantees given by the United States to Panama were conditional on the latter's fulfillment of its international obligations. Panama should now take the necessary steps to establish the boundary in accordance with the White award.[7]

On March 18, the President of Panama appealed over Hughes' head to President Harding, ". . . recalling your kind words with which you expressed your friendship and good wishes towards my country when you honored us with your visit in November." The appeal was promptly denied. "The communications from our State Department to the government of Panama and the government of Costa Rica have been sent with the full knowledge and hearty approval of the Executive," said Harding.[8]

Assured of Harding's backing, Hughes studied the situation further, and on April 27, in response to another long note from Panama, he warned that if Panama did not proceed to transfer the territory and establish the boundary in accordance with the White award, the United States would "find itself compelled to proceed in the manner which may be requisite" to see that it was done.[9] After several more diplomatic exchanges and a fruitless visit by a Panamanian mission to Washington, Panama receded. With the United States Navy standing by to guarantee that there would be no further difficulty, Costa Rica took possession of the disputed area in early September.

While the affair between Panama and Costa Rica never assumed the proportions of the Mexican crisis that had greeted incoming President

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-83; *New York Times* (Mar. 6, 1921).
[7] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921*, Vol. 1, pp. 184-88.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

Wilson, it was a pesky business that might well have got out of hand and led to general war in Central America had the new administration vacillated. Instead, the matter was handled firmly, through excellent teamwork between incoming and outgoing administrations, and demonstrated the new administration's potential for prompt decision. The episode also served to suggest the future pattern of relationships between Harding and his Secretary of State.

Some Notes to Europe

The Panama-Costa Rica affair was only the first of several events in the first month of the new administration that required Harding and Hughes to pick up matters from the Wilson administration and make policy assertions of their own.

Next was the question of the United States interest in the former German overseas territories, which were about to be assigned to various powers as mandates under the League. Just before leaving office, Secretary Colby had protested the action of the League and the Allied Supreme Council in assigning these territories without reference to a participating war power—the United States. He had particularly protested the assignment of Yap to Japan because of the interest of the United States in cable rights there.

On arriving at the department, Hughes reviewed the background of this problem with the outgoing officials and studied the memorandum that President Wilson had put on file on March 3. On March 12, he and Harding had a long conference about it. At the conclusion, it was announced from the White House that the new administration endorsed the position Colby had taken. The failure of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, the basic authority under which the mandates were being assigned, did not imply renunciation of American rights to German territories; those rights would have to be settled by specific negotiation and agreement.[10]

On April 2, Hughes expressed this view in parallel notes to Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, with copies released to the press.[11] The

[10] *New York Times* (Mar. 13, 1921). Editorially, the *Times* commented that this was a "high tribute to the services rendered by Secretaries Colby and Davis," and that it also reflected "the very highest credit to the fairness and good sense of the new Secretary of State."

[11] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 2, pp. 279-83.

notes included the full text of Wilson's memorandum of March 3, which had not previously been known to the public. In his notes, however, Hughes shifted the argument away from the question of Wilson's veracity by insisting that if his basic point were granted, it made no difference what Wilson had agreed to. No nation could be bound by action taken under a treaty it had not ratified.

This vigorous assertion promptly raised Hughes's stock with the Senate Republican leaders who had suspected him of excess internationalism.[12] Furthermore, Hughes succeeded in sustaining his point in subsequent exchanges with the other powers. After lengthy negotiations, a treaty giving American approval of the proposed Yap mandate, with a guarantee of access for communications and other purposes, was signed and ratified by the Senate in February 1922. Negotiations about American rights in territories mandated to other powers dragged on for almost a decade.

The willingness of the European powers to see the American point on the disposition of German territories may have been increased by the indirect support the new administration gave them in their efforts to get a reparations agreement with Germany. A few days after Harding took office, a conference at London broke up over Germany's refusal to commit itself to the amount demanded, and Great Britain and France brought additional pressure by ordering their armies of occupation deeper into the Rhineland. On March 23, 1921, Germany made an indirect plea for intercession by the United States. The American reply, sent to Germany on March 29 and released to the press on April 4, was noncommittal. It emphasized that the United States stood with the Allies on Germany's moral obligation to pay reparations and expressed the hope that the apparent desire of Germany to reopen negotiations might lead to a prompt settlement.

The cool tone of this note did not stop the Germans. On April 20, they formally requested the United States to mediate the reparations question, pledging themselves in advance to pay any amount the President found to be just. The following day the United States declined to mediate, but Hughes did suggest that if Germany would formulate some new proposals, we would bring them to the attention of the Allies in the hope of getting negotiations started again, and would even participate in the discussions if the Allies agreed. The new German proposals were received on April 25 and shown informally to the British, French,

[12] Pusey, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 447-48.

Italian, and Japanese ambassadors. The response to this diplomatic peepshow was negative, and Hughes informed Germany on May 3 that the United States did not regard its proposals as a suitable basis for discussion. He again urged Germany to deal directly with the Allies. With the United States out of the way, the Allies gave Germany an ultimatum on May 5 to come to terms within six days or they would occupy the entire Ruhr area. On the sixth day, Germany agreed unconditionally.[13]

The rulers of Soviet Russia, who had been unsuccessful in attempts to deal with Wilson, also lost no time in trying out the new administration. On March 20, they addressed a communication directly to President Harding, suggesting resumption of trade relations. Apparently miscalculating the nature of American politics, however, the Russians made the mistake of including in their note a strong criticism of the conduct of President Wilson. After brief consideration by the cabinet, they were delivered a blunt rebuff on March 25.[14]

The Responsibilities of Office

Another important example of continuity in foreign policy between the Wilson and the Harding administrations was the matter of recognizing Mexico. After the inauguration of President Obregón in December, there were some preliminary negotiations, but as the end of Wilson's term came near, the Mexicans let the subject drop with the obvious hope that Harding would be easier to deal with. However, it quickly became apparent that the new administration would take as stern an attitude toward Mexico as the old one. Recognition was accorded only after two more years of difficult negotiations.

The administration itself was apparently taken by surprise when, immediately after inauguration, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge suggested bringing up for ratification a treaty with Colombia that had been negotiated by William Jennings Bryan in 1913, pigeonholed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for several years, and rejected in 1919. Harding endorsed the idea, and this long-pending business was soon taken care of.[15] Commenting on the shrieks of protest some Republicans were making over this apparent embrace of Wilsonism, the *New York*

[13] For these exchanges with Germany, see *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 2, pp. 37-58.

[14] *Ibid.,* pp. 763-64, 768.

[15] The purpose of the treaty was to satisfy Colombia's grievance over the loss of Panama. Including some vague expressions of regret and a $25 million indemnity, it

Times of March 11, 1921 warned the GOP to be prepared for many more such turnabouts; such were the responsibilities of office.

A little later, the administration also discovered that the responsibility of conducting foreign relations required some sidestepping on campaign commitments. The case was that hardy perennial, the Panama Canal tolls issue. The Republicans had kept the issue alive throughout the two Wilson terms and promised in the 1920 platform to restore the preference for American coastwise shipping. Although Harding himself had specifically endorsed the plank, the administration now did its best to forget the matter. A bill was introduced in the Senate, however, and in September 1921 Harding asked that passage be deferred until a more propitious moment for fear it would jeopardize the pending disarmament conference. The Senate passed the bill anyway, but the administration poured cold water at every opportunity, and it died a lingering death in the House.

Harding and Hughes were much applauded, both for their preservation of continuity in the aspects of foreign policy that had not been at issue in the campaign, and for the promptness with which they met the new problems that arose. "To have the Government . . . working again in a normal and healthy manner brings a sense of relief even to those who do not belong to the party that has come to power," commented one journal.[16]

RETREAT FROM VERSAILLES

While handling with great skill the relatively easy foreign policy questions that arose during its first weeks in office, the Harding administration wrestled with the complex and politically difficult problem of policy toward the League of Nations, peace with Germany, and related matters stemming from the unratified Treaty of Versailles.

The new Secretary of State, a man with a strong sense of personal honor, had assured the American public as a member of the campaign Committee of Thirty One that Harding would bring the United States

had been attacked by Republicans, especially Theodore Roosevelt, as "blackmail," and "an attack on the honor of the United States." Lodge now gravely assured the Senate that before his death Roosevelt had changed his mind about the treaty; besides, it was necessary to open the way for American oil concessions there. "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 63 (June 1921), p. 577.

[16] *Ibid.* (May 1921), p. 451.

into the League with appropriate reservations. When they discussed his appointment, Hughes had again expressed the opinion that the new administration should make a fresh analysis of the Versailles Treaty and ask the Senate to ratify it with carefully framed reservations. Harding did not demur and went on to bestow the appointment, despite the resentment of many Senate leaders, and announced that Hughes would have wide discretion in the foreign policy sphere.[17] Meanwhile, of course, Harding was bombarded with advice from the Republicans with whom he had the closest ties to the effect that the United States must have nothing to do with the League or any other part of the treaty; a congressional resolution declaring the war over was all that was needed.

In his inaugural address, Harding continued to hedge, on one hand emphasizing the necessity of preserving American freedom of action, and on the other hand reiterating his willingness to associate with other nations under proper conditions. But what did it mean to "associate"? Join the League with significant reservations? Persuade other nations to join the United States in rewriting the Covenant? Establish a new organization in place of, or paralleling, the League? Or was this merely a vague expression of attitude, without specific content? If the administration were not going to abdicate altogether in favor of Congress, some sort of specific proposal would have to be laid before the special session to convene on April 11.

A Political Problem

In the month following inauguration day, Harding and Hughes discussed the problem several times, and each had long talks with key members of the Senate. Hughes continued to urge reconsideration of the treaty, with major reservations.[18] While a few legislators shared his view, most of them adamantly opposed it. A canvass showed that the election had, if anything, strengthened the irreconcilables; it would be difficult to muster the necessary two thirds vote of the Senate to ratify it.

Not only did the American friends of the League continue to urge Harding to make an effort to get the treaty ratified, but foreign nations

[17] Pusey, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 431.

[18] While Hughes was a warm supporter of the League in general, he had from the beginning been opposed to its most controversial feature, the principle of collective security through common action against aggressors, as embodied in the celebrated Article X. Dexter Perkins, "The Department of State and American Public Opinion," in Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (eds.), *The Diplomats* (1953), pp. 282-308, at pp. 287-88.

also did what they could within the limits of propriety to obtain the same result. France, for example, sent former premier René Viviani to Washington late in March to discuss the situation informally with Harding and Hughes. Viviani was, in the words of a State Department *aide-mémoire,* "extremely apprehensive" about the "disastrous consequences" that might flow from a separate American peace with Germany. He emphasized that the League was a going concern, with some forty member states, and hoped that the United States would soon take the place that was waiting for it. To that end, he suggested that Great Britain and France would be willing to discuss modifications in the charter, but he gave no encouragement to the more drastic alternatives being discussed, such as replacing the League with a new organization.[19] While his conversations with Harding apparently gave M. Viviani no clear impression of what the President would do, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee invited him to a formal session and advised him forthrightly: no Versailles Treaty, no League, just a resolution declaring the war over—but with no surrender of American war rights! Having straightened out Viviani, several senators rushed to tell the press what they had told him. The event touched off editorial comment about legislative invasion of the President's constitutional responsibility to negotiate with foreign nations.[20]

Harding Takes the Plunge

Harding apparently remained in doubt about his decision until just before the special session of Congress opened on April 11. There were last-minute conferences with the cabinet and with congressional leaders. Finally, on April 12, Harding mounted the rostrum in the House of Representatives and took the plunge. Toward the end of a long address, in which he touched on many aspects of foreign and domestic policy, he said: "But there is no longer excuse for uncertainties respecting some phases of our foreign relationship. In the existing League of Nations, world-governing with its superpowers, this Republic will have no part. There can be no misinterpretation, and there will be no betrayal of the deliberate expression of the American people in the recent election. . . ."[21] As the isolationists applauded this long-awaited rejection of the League

[19] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. 964-67.

[20] *New York Times* (Apr. 5, 1921); "The March of Events," *The World's Work,* Vol. 42 (June 1921), p. 115.

[21] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. xvii-xviii.

by name, Harding again promised to seek an association of nations that would not involve surrender of sovereignty, but he said nothing about how or when this might be done. To formalize the peace with Germany, Harding indicated approval of the Senate's long cherished idea of peace by resolution. However, he warned Congress that a unilateral declaration would not in itself secure the American rights that were intimately connected with the settlements already made. The wisest course, therefore, would be to "engage under the existing treaty," with appropriate reservations and modifications. Apparently worried over his relationship with the Senate, and with the Viviani episode fresh in mind, Harding made several references in the speech to his intention to consult with the Senate and respect its rights under the Constitution, but he also repeatedly warned the Senate not to infringe the responsibility of the executive branch for conducting foreign relations.

After Harding's address, there was widespread speculation about Hughes. Having failed to persuade the administration to a policy to which he was publicly committed, would he now resign? Hughes apparently gave it some consideration but decided to stick with the administration and do the best he could in the circumstances. While he said nothing publicly, he told his friends that he and Harding had concluded that there was no possibility of getting the Senate to approve participation on any basis and that they could see no point in wrecking the administration in a futile fight on the issue.[22]

A Separate Peace

With the League decision made, there remained to conclude the war with Germany. The Knox peace resolution was introduced in the Senate the day after Harding's address and passed by that body on April 29. In the House there was a delay of several weeks, first at the request of the administration because passage at that particular time might embarrass the Allies in reparations negotiations with Germany, and later because the House leaders wanted a simpler form of the resolution. The Senate and House versions were reconciled in conference, the resolution passed on July 1 and was signed by Harding on the following day.

Hughes continued to counsel, and Harding agreed, that the peace resolution was not enough. If postwar relationships were not to be hope-

[22] See Pusey, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 434.

lessly confused, it would be necessary for the United States to join with the Allies, and with Germany and its allies, in some parts of the Versailles Treaty. After consulting the Senate leaders, however, Harding and Hughes decided that this too was a hopeless fight; the Senate wanted no part of anything called the Versailles Treaty. Finally, Hughes concocted an ingenious German treaty that incorporated direct language from both the congressional peace resolution, in order to reassure the Senate, and pertinent passages from the Treaty of Versailles, in order to clarify United States relations with the signers of that instrument. The treaty was signed with Germany on August 25, 1921, and ratified with important reservations on October 18. Thus the United States got most of the benefits and none of the obligations of Versailles.[23]

Life Outside the League

Whether the United States was a member or not, the League of Nations and other bodies set up under the treaty existed and dealt with many matters in which the United States was interested. Hughes's first thought was that Wilson's order withdrawing the American representatives from the Allied Council of Ambassadors and the Reparations Commission was too drastic. Only five days after inauguration, he instructed the former reparations representative, who was still in Paris, to stop dismantling his organization and stand by for further instructions.[24] The matter remained in abeyance until May 6, when Lloyd George formally inquired about United States intentions. Shortly it was announced that Colonel George Harvey, newly designated as Ambassador to Great Britain, would represent the President in the Allied Supreme Council. The Ambassador to France would resume his former place as unofficial representative in the Council of Ambassadors, and the former unofficial representative on the Reparations Commission would also resume attendance.[25]

A few months later, however, the Senate intervened by attaching to the resolution ratifying the German peace treaty a reservation forbidding United States representation in these bodies except by specific act of Congress. The reservation was criticized as an unconstitutional invasion of the President's authority to conduct foreign relations, but the admin-

[23] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 2, pp. 29-33; Pusey, *op. cit.,* Vol. 2, pp. 440-42.
[24] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. 11-12.
[25] *Ibid.,* pp. 12-15.

istration acquiesced and again withdrew the representatives. With this attitude dominant in Congress, it was impossible for the United States to have any representation, even unofficial, in the political organs of the League of Nations. Hughes did, however, risk congressional displeasure by occasionally sending observers to League meetings on social and economic matters.[26]

While Wilson's order withdrawing the unofficial representatives had been well publicized and thus came promptly to the new administration's attention, Hughes apparently did not realize that subordinates in some parts of the department had taken Wilson's withdrawal orders literally and stopped answering mail from the League. For several months, most League communications continued to be pigeonholed. The matter was called to Hughes's attention by persons outside the department, the principal offending bureaucrat was transferred overseas, and specific orders were issued to respond to all League communications.[27]

Relations with the League remained a constant source of political irritation during Harding's administration. Each new gesture of cooperation brought criticism and pressure from the Hill, while each decision not to cooperate or send observers to meetings brought ridicule from friends of the League for an ostrich-like policy. In such a political climate the notion of the United States taking the lead in the establishment of some new or different "association of nations" gradually faded from discussion.

THE DISARMAMENT TRIUMPH

During the first few months of the Harding administration, United States diplomacy was mainly concerned with disengagement from the

[26] Pusey, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 434-35.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 436; see also Graham H. Stuart, *The Department of State* (1949), pp. 269-70. There seems to be some difference between the authorities as to how serious this delinquency was. Pusey records that "for the next two and a half months" after inauguration League communications went unanswered, and emphasizes Hughes's wrath when he discovered what was going on. Stuart, however, says that there was a six-month gap and notes that communications were resumed "when public protests became very vociferous." Stuart quotes without comment Hughes's explanation that he had not known about this, but also points out that the responses when made were "written in the most noncommittal phraseology that the Department could devise." It is interesting to note that over a decade later, the manner in which American officials were to address an official of the League remained a matter of some controversy in the department. Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943* (1956), p. 76.

debris of the past. The dominant themes were assertion of American rights coupled with withdrawal from responsibility for world leadership. In the summer of 1921, however, Harding and Hughes found a field of foreign relations in which they could break new ground. The issue was mutual disarmament, an idea that did not originate with them but which they quickly made their own. In their first year in office, they won what appeared for a time to be a great world triumph for themselves and for the United States. And, unlike Wilson's essay in world leadership, the Harding administration's ventures strengthened, rather than eroded, its domestic political position.

The Borah Resolutions

Since the end of the war, world disarmament had been discussed on suitable occasions as an ultimate objective of American foreign policy, but no one seemed to do anything about it until the lame duck congressional session following Harding's election. At that time, Senator William Borah put his fellow-legislators and President-elect Harding on the spot by trying to include in a navy appropriation bill a resolution calling on the President to convene an international conference for naval disarmament. While Harding and most of the leaders of Congress had to be for disarmament, they were reluctant to accept Borah's demand for a conference instead of, rather than in addition to, naval appropriations. The matter was deferred by letting the navy bill go over to the special session of April 1921.

Meanwhile, the disarmament idea seemed to find increasing favor. With Japan upsetting the balance of sea power in the Pacific, both Great Britain and the United States were faced with the prospect of choosing between entering an arms race or being left far behind. In March 1921, Great Britain formally declared for the race, but obviously felt uneasy about it. Congress had authorized a big United States fleet in 1916, but most of it was not yet built, and since the war it had become increasingly difficult to get the appropriations to keep construction going. As the new administration opened, Harding and Hughes were interested in disarmament but were uncertain about how or when the subject could be taken up. Opening the special session in April, Harding said: "We are ready to cooperate with other nations to approximate disarmament, but merest prudence forbids that we disarm alone." A week later, speaking in New York, he hinted at ". . . our purpose to invite the present-day civilization

to cast aside the staggering burden of armament," but announced no specific plans.[28]

Harding Faces the Issue

As was expected, Borah reopened his campaign when the navy appropriation bill was reintroduced in the special session. Sympathetic Democrats in the House tried to attach to the bill a resolution urging the President to take early action for an international conference. The effort was defeated when Representative Franklin W. Mondell, the Republican floor leader, assured the House that the administration had the matter under consideration, ". . . but manifestly no action should be taken along these lines until we shall have arrived at a condition and situation in our foreign relationships in which our motives and purposes may not be misunderstood or misconstrued."[29] The bill was passed by the House without a disarmament provision. Several days later the Senate Naval Affairs Committee rejected the Borah proposal, after Senators Miles Poindexter and Frederick Hale, who had discussed the matter with Harding, reported that the President was opposed, both because of international conditions at that particular time and because the calling of an international conference ought to be an executive function.[30] Since these events occurred at precisely the time the administration was exploring informally the possibility of taking the initiative in reopening the reparations discussions,[31] it is no wonder that Harding and Hughes felt that they had their hands full.

Borah, however, served notice that he would reopen the issue on the Senate floor, and the public seemed to respond warmly to his campaign. There also began to be indications that Great Britain would soon propose a conference on Far Eastern matters, presumably to include the balance of naval strength in the Pacific. On May 17, there was a new development. While refusing to say that they spoke for the administration, Poindexter and other senators who had recently transmitted Harding's objections now announced that they were withdrawing their objections.[32] The Borah amendment to the navy bill was passed unanimously by the

[28] *New York Times* (Apr. 20, 1921).
[29] *Ibid.* (Apr. 28, 1921).
[30] *Ibid.* (May 5, 1921).
[31] See *supra*, pp. 237-38.
[32] *New York Times* (May 18, 1921).

Senate on May 25, and the bill itself passed on June 1. Harding then apparently decided to go the whole way and get on record in hope of softening the impression that his hand had been forced. On June 29, as the conference report on the navy bill was being considered, a letter from Harding specifically asking an expression of opinion about arms limitation by international agreement was read in the House.

Once committed, it became necessary for the administration to move rapidly to stay ahead of Great Britain. On July 7, while the Senate and House conferees were still putting the finishing touches on the navy bill and resolution, reports from London indicated that a Far Eastern conference might be proposed at almost any moment. Determined that there would be but one conference and that the United States should have the lead, Hughes rushed to the White House and got a go-ahead from Harding. On July 8, instructions to suggest a conference informally and confidentially went to our ambassadors in the major capitals. The responses were favorable, and on July 11, it was formally announced that invitations were being issued to Great Britain, France, Italy, China, and Japan. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Portugal later were invited, and the conference was scheduled to convene at Washington in November.[83]

Awed by the enterprise that had been launched in his name, Harding told Hughes he was to head the American delegation and placed the entire responsibility of preparing for the conference in his hands. Harding and Hughes were careful not to make Wilson's mistake. They appointed Henry Cabot Lodge and Oscar Underwood, the Senate majority and minority leaders, to the delegation, as well as Republican elder statesman Elihu Root. Hughes directed a working group from the State and Navy departments that assembled data on the fleets of the world and on other questions that might arise. He decided to propose a sharp reduction in naval armament, secured the backing of Harding and other delegates, and overruled the protesting admirals. Prior to the conference, however, the nature of the American position was a well-kept secret.

The Washington Conference

The various national delegations gathered in Washington on Armistice Day for the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a

[83] *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1921,* Vol. 1, pp. 18-57; Pusey, *op. cit.,* Vol. 2, pp. 453-58.

ceremony calculated to put them in the proper frame of mind for disarmament. The conference itself started the following morning, with most of official, diplomatic, and social Washington and press representatives from all over the world on hand for the opening ceremonies. President Harding made a welcoming address. The head of the British delegation responded and, by prior arrangement, expressed the desire of all the delegations that Hughes be the permanent chairman.

Hughes arose and made the gracious remarks anticipated on the occasion, but then took the conference by surprise with a detailed proposal for drastic reduction in the world's navies. He proposed a ten-year moratorium on the building of capital ships, stabilization of the existing 5:5:3 ratio of strength among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, and—most radical of all—the scrapping of a long list of battleships in service or under construction. This bold stroke had a tremendous impact both at home and abroad and put the other delegations in a position where they could hardly resist in principle.[34] In the succeeding weeks of negotiation, the Hughes proposals on capital ships were approved by the conference with relatively minor modifications. Due largely to the objections of France, however, some exceptions were made —which turned out to be much more significant than they appeared at the time—permitting almost unlimited construction of submarines and naval air power.

Paralleling the naval disarmament negotiations, the conference came to important new understandings about the Pacific and Far East. An Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which had been very disturbing to the United States and Canada and which the British were willing to abandon if it could be done gracefully, was replaced by a Four Power Pact among Great Britain, Japan, France, and the United States. The parties pledged to respect each other's possessions and dominions in the Pacific, to refer to joint conference any disputes on Pacific questions, and in case of threats by other powers, to communicate fully and frankly ". . . in order to arrive at an understanding as to the most efficient measures to be taken, jointly or separately, to meet the exigencies of the particular situation."[35] A third agreement at the conference was a Nine Power

[34] As one observer put it, "Secretary Hughes sank in 35 minutes more ships than all the admirals of the world have sunk in a cycle of centuries." Quoted by Stuart, *The Department of State*, p. 266.

[35] During the negotiation of this pact, there was an interesting fumble when President Harding, who had taken little part in the conference, was asked by reporters whether

Treaty, in which all the participating nations pledged to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and to preserve the open door for commerce there.

The conference broke up in February. *The World's Work* called it:

> . . . an epoch-making success. Its tangible achievements alone would make it memorable history. But its healing effect upon the psychology of a passion-ridden world is even more momentous. It has popularized the habit of agreement; it has brought the United States into international affairs in an atmosphere of reason, of polite discussion, even of after-dinner urbanity. It is now once more possible for a statesman to yield an untenable position without being suspected of treason, or to admit another nation's claim without suspicion of weakness.[36]

As usual, the Senate was less enthusiastic, particularly about the mention of "efficient measures" under the Four-Power Pact. On the basis of assurances from Hughes, backed up by Lodge and Underwood, that the pledge was only to consult and not necessarily to do anything, the treaties were ratified in the spring of 1922. Ratification of the Four-Power Pact, however, was secured only by adding a specific reservation that the treaty was understood to involve "no commitment to armed force, no alliance, no obligation to join in any defense."

THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY, AND CONGRESS

Reviewing the record, it appears that President Harding's main contribution to American foreign relations was in choosing Hughes for Secretary of State and persisting until the Senate accepted him. After inauguration, the ideas, the initiative, and the vigor in conducting foreign affairs came almost entirely from Hughes. It was a sharp change from Wilson's relations with his Secretaries of State, but it was precisely the relationship anticipated in Harding's vision of a cabinet of the Best Minds. Harding's deference to Hughes, which in the beginning was so marked as to be embarrassing to the latter, gradually deepened into

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the Japanese home islands came within its scope. Harding said that they did not, without realizing that Hughes had just established by painful negotiations, and had told the press, that they did. Again there were predictions that Hughes would resign, but the Secretary kept calm and went to the White House, where he received the President's apology for going beyond his depth and drafted a "correction" which let Harding down as easy as possible. Pusey, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 498-99.

[36] "The March of Events," *The World's Work*, Vol. 43 (February 1922), p. 345.

affectionate respect. The President praised the Secretary in public, allowed him wide discretion in policy matters, and gave him full support inside the administration.

It is important to notice, however, that Hughes was careful not to strain the relationship. Not only was he tactful and considerate of Harding in small matters, but he operated well within the limits imposed by Harding's personal views and the political position of the administration. Hughes preserved the confidence Harding had placed in him by not asking too much of Harding and by staying out of political trouble, frequently at a considerable sacrifice of his own preferences.

A good example was the compromise over the appointment of ambassadors. Left to himself, Hughes would have filled most of these posts with diplomatic career men, as he did the top State Department positions, possibly sprinkling in a few university presidents and other blue-ribbon types. But he fully recognized Harding's expectation, and the pressure Harding was under, to use these appointments to pay political obligations in the traditional way. Thus Hughes acquiesced in the appointment of Colonel Harvey to the embassy at London, even though he had reason to believe that Harvey would be ambitious, indiscreet, and uncontrollable—as, indeed, he turned out to be. Hughes swallowed several other unpalatable and obviously political appointments, but by doing so he kept personal control over the majority of embassy posts. When Harding did not have candidates of his own, Hughes was able to put forward men of recognized standing and ability. A few of Wilson's ambassadors were retained, and several diplomatic career men were elevated to ambassador rank. The historian of the State Department concludes: "Although a few appointments were inexcusably bad, . . . the Harding-Hughes regime made a far better record in diplomatic appointments than the . . . administration which preceded it."[37]

More important, of course, than any compromises on personnel were the administration's compromises with the Senate on substantive policy. Harding and Hughes chose to accept, without an open fight, some important policy limitations the Senate could impose through its power to accept or reject treaties, and even to acquiesce without much struggle in several senatorial efforts to tie their hands on specific matters. The concessions were mostly on the part of Hughes. Harding held no principle

[37] Stuart *op. cit.*, p. 264.

of foreign relations strongly enough to override his instinct to choose the course of least political exertion. Recognizing Harding's distaste for a clash, and counting the odds against victory, Hughes chose not to make an all-out fight for the League and the Treaty of Versailles, despite his personal commitment and the urging of his friends. By not trying to push the President too far, and by nursing his political credit carefully, Hughes survived and eventually achieved a number of triumphs, but always within boundaries sharply defined by the Senate.[38]

In the long view of history, it may appear that the fight for the League was one that Harding and Hughes should have made at any cost, and that the success of the Washington conference was illusory. Be that as it may, Harding appeared in his own time, and in terms of his political objectives, to be highly successful in dealing with foreign affairs.

[38] For a sharply critical view of the Harding-Hughes deference to the Senate, see George W. Wickersham, "The Senate and Our Foreign Relations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 2 (Dec. 15, 1923), pp. 177-92. By contrast, Hughes's biographer, Pusey, *op. cit., passim,* takes the view that Hughes constantly sailed as close to the wind of senatorial disapproval as possible.

CHAPTER 19

HARDING AND CONGRESS

President Harding's trials and triumphs in the fields of administrative management and foreign policy having been noted, his relations with Congress—and, less directly, with his party and the public—remain for examination. As his administration opened, many domestic issues that had been sidetracked during the war, plus the specific economic problems of postwar readjustment, were waiting to be dealt with. Harding had promised a strictly constitutional relationship between the President and Congress, and a return to what he called "party government, as distinguished from personal government, individual, dictatorial, autocratic, or whatnot." Could the Republicans in Congress achieve enough unity to deal, as a party, with their agenda, and could the system work effectively without the sort of "unconstitutional" leadership Wilson had exerted? As the months passed, the answers to these questions appeared increasingly to be in the negative.

A HARMONIOUS BEGINNING

Harding acted promptly after inauguration to soothe any congressmen who might still be upset by his cabinet appointments and his gentle promptings from Florida, and to lay the groundwork for cooperation. Inauguration was on a Friday; the following Monday, Harding entertained 21 Republican leaders of the House and Senate at dinner, for the express purpose of discussing legislative plans. In the ensuing weeks

there were conferences almost daily with individuals and groups from Congress. Some of these sessions obviously had to do with patronage, but legislative planning was said to be the main business. Particularly notable was a series of meetings Harding and Andrew Mellon, and later Mellon alone, had with the leaders of the committees dealing with finance.

By agreement with the legislative leaders, Harding convened the Sixty-seventh Congress for a special session on April 11. If mere numbers counted for anything, the Republicans were in a position to have their way. In the House there were 300 Republicans and only 132 Democrats; in the Senate the margin was 59-37. Almost as a matter of course, Harding read his opening message in person; Wilson had so firmly re-established the practice that it was no longer controversial, despite the prevailing talk of curtailing executive power.

The address to Congress was long, comprehensive, and (except for the section on foreign affairs discussed in the previous chapter), undramatic. The leading themes were economy in government and lower taxes. Harding pledged the executive branch to frugality and more businesslike methods; he asked Congress to help by exercising restraint in appropriations and by passing the budget act. These measures would open the way to a cut in the taxes that were said to be burdening citizens and stifling the economy. To ease the current economic dislocations, Harding suggested an emergency tariff on agricultural products, followed by a new and carefully drawn general tariff act. The economic distress of the railroads, he suggested, would be alleviated by adjustments (presumably downward) in both wages and freight rates to encourage more traffic. Harding also spoke, rather vaguely, of suitable aids to agriculture. The economy would be benefited by less governmental interference with business but by suitable federal aid to highway construction, radio, aviation, and the merchant marine. Also suggested were establishment of a federal department of welfare, reorganization and improvement of services to veterans, and studies of race relations problems.[1]

Much of this program implied revival of legislation approved by the previous Congress but blocked by Wilson's vetoes. An immigration restriction bill was repassed and signed by the President on May 19. An emergency tariff bill, slightly modified from the previous version but

[1] *New York Times* (Apr. 13, 1921).

still covering mainly agricultural products, was quickly put through Congress and signed by Harding on May 27. The budget bill was reintroduced and became law on June 10. Wilson's inauguration day veto of the army appropriation for the coming fiscal year also made it necessary to reconsider that measure. Secretary of War Weeks made an interesting attempt to get Congress to ease the man-power cut that had caused Wilson's veto, but without success. As he signed the appropriation bill on June 30, Harding informed Congress that he would comply with the cut so far as possible, but since he thought the government had a moral obligation not to force the discharge of men enlisted for specific terms he might have to ask for a deficiency appropriation later in the year.[2] Passing the navy appropriation bill, which had been blocked in the previous session by Senator Borah's disarmament and economy campaign, also caused a great deal of difficulty as noted in the chapter above. However, Harding eventually joined the disarmament movement, the bill was passed, and he signed it on July 11.

This completed the business held over from the previous session, but Chairman Joseph W. Fordney of the House Ways and Means Committee was now ready with a new general tariff bill. Hearings had been held during the winter, and the Republican members of the committee had laboriously rewritten hundreds of pages of schedules. Since the bill provided for a headlong return to the high tariff policy of the pre-Wilson days, there was a good deal of vocal opposition on principle, not to mention quibbling about rates on thousands of individual items. Nevertheless, the House leadership sent the bill to the floor under a tight rule limiting debate and amendments, and it was passed without undue difficulty on July 21.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

While this was going on in the House, the administration and its friends were having trouble in the Senate. Early in July, when the Senate completed action on the holdover bills mentioned above, majority leader Lodge proposed an adjournment until the House was finished with the tariff bill. To his surprise it was voted down, 27-24. Lodge,

[2] See comment on this point in Lindsay Rogers, "The First (Special) Session of the Sixty-Seventh Congress," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 16 (February 1922), pp. 41-52, at p. 44.

Penrose, and the other leaders mustered their forces in preparation for another try a few days later, even recalling some senators who had already left Washington, but an unofficial count showed the impossibility of carrying a motion to adjourn, and it was not even presented. A bipartisan farm bloc, which had begun to show its strength in the previous session, now insisted that the Senate remain in session and take up a number of long-deferred agricultural measures—and had the votes to back up the demand. Senator Kenyon of Iowa, the farm bloc leader, conferred with Harding and with the administration leaders in the Senate. They agreed that if the Senate passed any six of the dozen or so measures in which the farmers were interested, an adjournment would be permitted.[8]

Harding Intervenes

The bill actually before the Senate during these negotiations was a veterans bonus proposal. The Senate leaders were relatively indifferent to its fate, but some senators were loud in its support and few felt safe in opposing it openly. On July 7, Harding went to the Capitol to confer informally with various senators and to express his opposition on economy grounds. This did not stop the movement, and on July 12, apparently at the urging of the Republican leaders, Harding made an official appearance before the Senate to request that the bonus be deferred. With that kind of support, the Senate felt safe in burying the bill. Harding was much applauded in the press for taking a stand against this presumably popular but irresponsible measure.

With the bonus out of the way, the Senate turned to other subjects and in the ensuing weeks completed action on a number of the bills demanded by the farm bloc: regulation of packers and stockyards, regulation of grain futures trading, credits to underwrite agricultural exports, and measures to increase the lending capacity of farm loan banks. Before the end of the session, Harding signed these measures into law. By then, the Republicans in the Senate were in such disarray that the leadership hesitated over the tariff bill, which had come over from the House. It was a complicated subject at best, and with Oscar Underwood leading

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49; John K. Barnes, "The Man Who Runs the Farm Bloc," *The World's Work*, Vol. 45 (November 1922), pp. 51-59. The latter article refers to Gray Silver, the Farm Bureau representative who was credited with having organized the effort to block adjournment.

the Democrats and the farm state Republicans on a rampage, matters might get completely out of hand. Finally, the administration and the Senate leaders announced that they had agreed to defer the tariff act temporarily, because of unsettled world economic conditions, and shelved the bill until the next session.

A Rebuff on Taxes

Meanwhile the House had turned from the tariff to the much-anticipated tax bill. Early in the session Mellon had presented his tax program, which called for repeal of the excess profits tax, a reduction of individual income tax rates to a maximum surtax of 32 per cent in the highest brackets, and various other adjustments. As the summer wore on, there began to be some doubt that such drastic cuts would leave enough revenue to balance the next year's budget, and there were further consultations between Mellon and the House leaders. Mellon finally agreed to cutting the maximum surtax rate only to 40 per cent, and the bill then passed on August 20.

When the tax bill was called up in the Senate late in September, the farm bloc again showed its strength. As a result, the maximum surtax rate was raised to 50 per cent, individual exemptions were increased, most federal transportation taxes and many miscellaneous excises were repealed, a gift tax provision was inserted, and corporation income taxes were raised from 10 to 15 per cent. After much debate, the bill passed the Senate on November 8. Harding then openly asked the House, by letter, to reject the Senate amendment on the 50 per cent surtax rate, but his appeal was ignored. By this time, there had been so much haggling that hardly anyone was happy with the bill, but it passed, and Harding signed it on November 23, 1921.

Thus Harding's first legislative session ended on a note of uncertainty and mild frustration. It was not that the session had been completely unproductive. In addition to the legislation already mentioned, there were such popular measures as the establishment of the Veterans Bureau, aid to maternal and child care, an anti-beer bill, and various minor constructive measures. Allowing for normal slippage, one could not say that the Republican program had altogether failed. But there was a notable absence of enthusiasm, unity, and clear direction. Much of the constructive legislation that passed was more or less bipartisan in origin and had been long under consideration. While the farm legislation was within

the bounds of Republican principle, it had been put through reluctantly and with ill grace; neither the administration nor the congressional leaders had their hearts in it. The all-important tax bill had been muddled through at best, and the tariff was still unsettled. The opportunities that went with being back in power after eight years, with a huge congressional majority, seemed to be slipping away.

"EXACTLY THE PERSONALITY THAT WAS NEEDED"

While there was considerable disillusionment with Congress, the prestige of the administration was still on the rise in the fall of 1921. The miraculous savings by Charles G. Dawes and his Budget Bureau were getting wide publicity. There was still much hopeful talk of large-scale administrative reorganization. Hays bustled about catching mail robbers, encouraging the civil service, and giving the Post Office more internal energy and outside attention than it had enjoyed in years. Hoover took steps to facilitate the new era of efficiency in industry and cooperation in business. American relations with the League and the European powers were finally stabilized, for better or for worse, and within the bounds of Senate tolerance, Hughes was handling foreign affairs with crisp competence. The dramatic opening of the disarmament conference in November gave the administration's prestige still another boost.

Harding's personal popularity remained high. His hand in the accomplishments of the administration might not be visible, but that, it was explained, was the Harding way. A popular writer discussed Harding's talent for what he called political "pervasion":

> It is politics that starts affably, continues affably, and ends affably; that begins with a smile that looks sympathetic and ends with a smile that is obligatory. Between these smiles it spreads, ramifies, goes around corners, composes here, disposes there, conciliates, commends, and combines. And the main thing about it is that though seeming to be nonresistant it resists, though seeming to surrender it subjugates, though seeming to accept it directs.[4]

Members of his administration were even less restrained. Will Hays, for example, told a life insurance convention in Cleveland:

[4] Samuel G. Blythe, "Doings in Normalcyville," *Saturday Evening Post* (July 2, 1921), pp. 3-4, 65-66.

> At any time and under any Presidency, the state of mind of the country is largely influenced by the state of mind of the man in the White House. . . .
>
> . . . In this present time, the operation of one of those higher laws that work for the world's good has brought to the White House exactly the personality that was needed to lead the country away from the turbulent passions of war back to the normal human nature of peace. If you, throughout the country, have been able to "sense" the curing and restorative qualities of President Harding's personality, much more vividly do we, who serve in contact with him, appreciate him as one whose greatest concern is justice and good faith, who cures excitement with serenity, who meets passion with gentleness, who conquers anger with tolerance, who overcomes violence with patience, who shames greed with unselfishness, whose test for every decision is: "What does good faith call on us to do"? whose approach to every problem is: "Which of these alternatives is just"?[5]

Most of the prose was not that purple, but all except the extremely unfriendly critics looked hopefully to the future. Harding had not grasped the legislative leadership, as many had hoped he would do, but he had fulfilled his pledge to give the country an antidote to Wilsonism. "He wished the country to approve him, not for pressing his leadership upon Congress, but rather for punctiliously refraining from interference with Congress."[6] Moreover, the situation in the Senate was changing rapidly. By the end of the session Senator Knox was dead, Senator Penrose was mortally ill, and it was apparent to all that the aging Lodge was no match for the unruly senators of the farm bloc, not to mention such fierce individualists as Borah, La Follette, and Hiram Johnson. Harding's intervention in the bonus debate was cited as evidence that he could be effective when he wanted to. Perhaps he had deliberately been giving the legislative leaders an opportunity to demonstrate their incapacity before he moved in. Mark Sullivan suggested that significant changes might be seen in Harding's second year.

> In this first year . . . a complete half circle has been covered. A year ago, Harding was said to be "the creature of a Senatorial oligarchy"; to-day, Harding is besought to let the Senate become the creature of his leadership. From asserting that the Senate was going to boss Harding, the pendulum has swung to where the country, and the Senate itself, begs Harding to boss the Senate.[7]

[5] *Review of Reviews,* Vol. 64 (October 1921), p. 343.

[6] Mark Sullivan, "One Year of President Harding," *The World's Work,* Vol. 43 (November 1921), p. 32.

[7] *Ibid.*

HOPE GRADUALLY FADES

But the new Harding did not emerge clearly, and the second year brought only a gradual deterioration of his position with Congress and the public. After a brief recess, Congress reconvened in regular session on December 5, 1921. Dawes's first budget, showing sharp reductions in expenditures and receipts substantially balancing expenditures—even with lower taxes—was presented. Harding's State of the Union message, which he read on the second day, was again comprehensive but unexciting. He directed attention to the pending tariff bill and urged that it provide flexibility by endowing the Tariff Commission with greater powers. He asked for a bill encouraging agricultural cooperatives, and for authority to negotiate with the European countries to get their war debts refunded on a practical long-range basis. He mentioned the need for a general plan for railway consolidation and orderly growth, and reported the prospect of substantial revenues from leases of mineral rights on public lands.[8] He also emphasized the need for a new policy toward the merchant marine. In a special message a little later, he recommended liquidation of the government-owned fleet built during the war, most of which had been idle ever since, and direct subsidies to maintain a privately owned and operated merchant marine.

Making the usual leisurely start, Congress got down to business after the holidays. An agricultural cooperatives bill was passed quickly. Early in February the war debt bill was also passed, although not in the form Harding wanted it; instead of plain executive authority, it provided for a joint legislative-executive commission to negotiate with debtor nations.

At this point the administration was enjoying national and world acclaim at the conclusion of the disarmament conference. Harding appeared before the Senate on February 10 to present the several treaties signed during the conference. The disarmament agreement was embraced enthusiastically, as well as the treaty giving the United States substantially what it had asked for on Yap. However, the Four Power Pact, as noted in a previous chapter, was discussed at length and ratified —with reservations—only after much additional information and many assurances that it involved no dangerous commitments were extracted from the administration.

[8] *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 65 (January 1922), pp. 15-16.

By now it was spring of an election year. The Senate still had the tariff bill to deal with, little had been done with Harding's merchant marine program (which even its friends frankly called the "ship subsidy" bill), and the bonus issue was rising again. Trying to head off the latter, Harding told Congress that he wanted it financed by a special sales tax, or not passed at all. "It is the fashion to criticize Congress, but President Harding's administration has not lost public confidence," a friendly editor commented at this point.[9] There were, however, a few straws in the wind. Will Hays had already gone to preach the doctrine of "service," which had been so well received at the Post Office, to the motion picture producers. It was known that Dawes would be leaving soon. A patently unfit appointee as Governor of Puerto Rico had already got into trouble. The Democrats in Congress, and reformers generally, were aroused over Elmer Dover's patronage grab at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. And on April 28, La Follette rose in the Senate to ask some questions about Secretary Fall's lease of oil drilling rights on the Navy reservation at Teapot Dome.

By summer, the situation had deteriorated even further. A national coal strike had been going on for three months, despite efforts of Secretaries Davis and Hoover to get a settlement, and a national railroad strike was just beginning. The House adjourned for six weeks, leaving the Senate plodding wearily through tariff schedules. With editorial writers pounding at him to take the lead, Harding's response was to renew his plea for the ship subsidy bill. "The political and governmental situation at Washington is not eliciting widespread admiration," confessed the editor who had been optimistic only three months before.[10] Among the evidences of unrest were reports that conservative congressmen close to the administration were being trounced in Republican primaries all over the country.

In August, presidential efforts to settle the railroad strike were rebuffed by both sides. Now apparently angry, Harding went to Congress on August 18 with a special report on the railroad situation, asking for additional power to deal with such emergencies, and emphasizing such principles as "the right to work" and "the mails must go through." In pursuance of these principles, he permitted Harry Daugherty, on September 1, to ask for one of the most sweeping antistrike injunctions in

[9] *Ibid.* (May 1922), p. 464.
[10] *Ibid.*, Vol. 66 (August 1922), p. 126.

American labor history. The railroad strike gradually fell apart during the following month, with the administration's role a matter of much controversy.

In September, the tariff bill was passed, amid reports of cynical log-rolling and last-minute triumphs of high-pressure lobbying. "Never, perhaps, has a tariff bill been so badly steered from the standpoint of winning public favor," commented one editor.[11] "Profiteer tariff" charged the opposition.[12] Harding signed the bill, noting his regret that more flexibility was not provided.

CLIMAX AND ANTICLIMAX

With his own prestige and that of Congress slipping badly, Harding made a belated, desperate bid for control. On September 19, 1922, he vetoed the bonus bill! He had ". . . reached his highest point in the respect of the American people," it was said.[13] The veto proved to be a tactical victory but a strategic loss. The House immediately passed the bill over Harding's veto, with even Representative Franklin W. Mondell, the majority leader who usually followed his lead, refusing to sustain the President. In the Senate, the veto was sustained by a margin of only four votes. It was noted, ironically, that even Lodge and other members of the inner circle deserted the President, while among those who saved him was the usually troublesome Borah. The stalemate was almost complete.

The people still seemed to blame Congress more than the President. In November the Republicans lost 76 seats in the House and 8 in the Senate, and many old-line Republicans were replaced by Republicans of the restless agrarian-isolationist variety. Harding's only reaction was to plug ahead on the same front. He called the lame ducks into session two weeks early and requested, in addition to the appropriations for the next fiscal year, another tax cut and—above all—his ship subsidy bill. His appropriation requests were badly slashed, the tax program was ignored, and midway in the session the Senate shelved the ship subsidy bill to take up farm credit legislation. Harding had reached the end of his legislative road.

[11] *Ibid.* (October 1922), p. 339.
[12] *The World's Work,* Vol. 44 (October 1922), p. 575.
[13] *Ibid.,* Vol. 47 (November 1923), p. 3.

Thus the characteristics of Harding's leadership suggested in his first year became unmistakably clear in his second. A complete abdication of leadership, so confidently predicted by some, did not come to pass. The rituals of executive participation, such as addresses to Congress, personal conferences with legislative leaders, and formal and informal appeals at various stages of the legislative process, were faithfully performed. Harding tried conscientiously and sometimes persistently to inform Congress of measures deemed necessary or desirable by the administration. And on occasions such as the veto of the bonus bill, he demonstrated courage in thwarting the desire of Congress to pass legislation he considered ill-timed or irresponsible.

The differences from the legislative methods of Wilson, for example, lay in the more subtle aspects of spirit, skill, and timing. So determined was Harding not to transgress on the independence of Congress, so certain was he that conciliation was the key to legislative success, that he approached Congress humbly with his positions compromised in advance. If ignored, he would remind gently. If attacked, he would compromise further. Plagued by deep differences among members of his party in Congress, he could offer only mild conciliation. He was incapable of bold action to form a new and effective legislative coalition. The idea of using the Republican party machinery, the federal patronage, and his great popularity with the people as levers to bend recalcitrant congressmen to his will was inconsistent with both his political philosophy and his personal nature. The measures on which he occasionally took the initiative and risked his influence were often ill-chosen, with little inherent political appeal. Harding could be dogged and occasionally courageous in a defensive way, but rarely imaginative in leadership.[14]

[14] William Bennett Munro, "Two Years of President Harding," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 131 (March 1923), pp. 384-93; Mark Sullivan, "Two Years of President Harding," *The World's Work*, Vol. 45 (November 1922), pp. 31-38.

CHAPTER 20

THE SENATOR AS PRESIDENT

Warren G. Harding is usually classified as one of the least distinguished and successful of American Presidents. This historical verdict is probably a fair one, but in justice to Harding, it should be recognized that the conditions of 1921 made his initial task considerably more difficult than the one Wilson had faced in 1913.

When Wilson was sworn in, the nation had been at peace and relatively prosperous for several years. The only situation, either internal or external, that might have required a significant emergency decision was in Mexico, and even that appears in retrospect as something less than a first-class crisis. The administrative machinery of the government was stable and presented no immediate major problems. The election of 1912 had resulted in an unmistakable public endorsement of the progressive reform point of view. The new President was relatively undistracted and free to lead, and the nation was in a mood to follow.

President Harding, however, found himself at the head of a nation floundering in the turbulent wake of war and "fatigued with the higher idealism"[1] of the previous administration's leadership. The road back to normalcy was obstructed by a number of complex problems that he and his administration were pledged to do something about: a national economic recession, a tangled set of international relationships, and several important matters of administrative management. Unfortunately, Harding's personal popularity and the Republican electoral triumph of 1920 had not settled the bitter factional quarrels in his party or the differences

[1] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957), p. 49.

of opinion in the nation about the political goals of the future. The prevailing political mood was a desire to be left alone, for disengagement from the problems and tensions of the past; the only issue to arouse much enthusiasm was a proposal for tax cuts. Leading the nation into the postwar era was bound to be a difficult task.

In reaction to Wilson, a Republican doctrine of the Presidency was advanced. This doctrine had been in eclipse since the advent of Theodore Roosevelt, but it had flourished in the days of the post-Civil War Republican hegemony, and its roots went deep into the whiggery of the party's ancestral past. Briefly, it called for a President who would accept Congress as the primary fountainhead of national policy, who would serve his party but not try to use it, who would preside over the executive branch but not dominate it, and who would be the mirror of the nation's desires but not the keeper of its conscience. In Warren G. Harding, the Republicans elected a man whose prior associations and experience led him to unquestioning acceptance of this doctrine, and whose mental equipment fitted him to it.

THE AWKWARD INTERVAL

In the four months between Harding's election and his installation in office a familiar pattern of frustration and stalemate was repeated. The outgoing administration, still disorganized from postwar turnover of personnel, had suffered from lack of leadership since Wilson's illness. Now repudiated at the polls and receiving little congressional support, Wilson and his associates conceded nothing but had little new to propose. While they waited for March 4, they made constructive but unimaginative efforts to put the administration's house in order. Congress, meeting in lame duck session, was busy but undisciplined. Much of its energy was spent harassing the administration and developing legislation certain to meet presidential vetoes. The President-elect was a member of the Senate at the beginning of the session, but he removed himself from Washington and resigned soon thereafter. While he kept in touch with legislative affairs in a general sort of way, he did not attempt positive leadership. Late in the session he intervened mildly with the limited objective of urging action on the most essential items on the agenda, the appropriation bills.

Harding's pre-inaugural activities were in many ways similar to those of Wilson, but there was a slight difference in pace and an important difference in approach. Both began by taking a month's vacation shortly after election. Harding, however, was far better equipped in terms of staff assistance, and he did not have the sort of prior claims on his time made by Wilson's gubernatorial duties. Harding initially intended to select and announce his principal cabinet members early, probably early in January, to give them plenty of time for advance preparations. Although he had his slate fairly complete by the desired time, he encountered difficulties of political clearance; several changes had to be made, and the first appointments were not announced until mid-February. Even so, this was earlier than Wilson, who had taken full advantage of the previous tradition that the cabinet appointments need not be announced until inauguration day.

Like Wilson, Harding had extensive consultations with the other leaders of his party during the election-to-inauguration period, but the spirit and purpose of his consultations were different. While Wilson had talked to representatives of most of the elements of the Democratic party, he made no secret of his preference for men who substantially accepted his views and leadership. Furthermore, Wilson kept his own counsel and reserved most decisions to himself. Harding, however, tried to make the selection of a cabinet and the planning of a post-inaugural program a group process, shared by most of the factions in his party. He was frustrated by the difficulty of finding common denominators of policy agreement among the "best minds" of the party and by the resentment of the various leaders when he tried to assemble a cabinet slate that would represent and do credit to the party as a whole. In choosing his cabinet, Harding made at least one important concession to the faction most openly critical but eventually discovered that only he could pick the cabinet, and that the party had little choice but to give him his own way when he persisted.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

At the time Harding took office, the government was not back on a peacetime basis, and administrative adjustments had been long deferred. Recognition of this situation, plus the Republican commitment to econ-

omy and businesslike methods, raised managerial activities to a relatively high place in the attentions of the new administration and of the public. Harding and his cabinet were widely perceived as having restored order and competent direction to long-neglected affairs of government.

By far the most important administrative development associated with Harding was the establishment, after at least a decade of discussion, of an executive budget system. Harding was fortunate in his selection of Charles G. Dawes, a man of great forcefulness and ability, as the first Director of the Bureau of the Budget. Dawes and his associates immediately demonstrated their potential usefulness to the President by establishing control over the expenditures for the current fiscal year, most of which had been appropriated by Congress several months before and were assumed to be already beyond significant influence by the incoming President. An important pledge of the new administration was redeemed when its first regular budget provided for balanced expenditures and revenues at a level considerably lower than the previous year. More important in the long run than his contributions to fiscal control were Dawes's contributions to the concept of organized staff work for the President. Operating in the name of the President, and with Harding's personal backing, Dawes succeeded in establishing the Budget Bureau's authority over a wide range of financial and administrative matters previously left to the departments and to Congress. The founding of the bureau was an important step in the institutionalization of the Presidency.

In contrast to its budgetary achievements, the Harding administration did not come up to expectations in the field of administrative reorganization. In Harding's day much of administrative science still appeared to consist of drawing organization charts; various elaborate plans for shuffling divisions and bureaus and consolidating and establishing new federal departments were prepared. Most of these plans failed of adoption for reasons familiar to students of administration: departmental possessiveness, interest group objections, divided responsibility between the Executive and Congress,[2] and the simple fact that many proposed reorganizations, no matter how plausible, turn out on close inspection to promise little if any net gain in efficiency. While grand reorganizations did not materialize, the Harding administration made some progress in limited areas—reorganization and expansion of the services of the De-

[2] Although administrative reorganization was in the Budget Bureau's legislative charter, Dawes agreed to stay out of that field and left it to a congressional commission, so that there was no focal point in the executive branch for reorganization efforts.

partment of Commerce, a classification and pay scheme for government employees, and a reorganization of agencies providing services to veterans, for example. The appointment of an *ad hoc* commission to advise the President on the latter problem was an early instance of a device much used by subsequent incoming Presidents.

In the early months of the Harding administration, the presidential appointments and other clearly identified political jobs were distributed without undue incident in traditional fashion. Unlike Wilson, who had begun with notions of using the appointing power in a personal way to bring intellectuals, reformers, and other "higher types" into the government, Harding tried to be the agent of his party. Except for an occasional intervention on behalf of a personal friend, Harding was mainly concerned with achieving an equitable distribution of patronage within the organization, more interested in the sponsorship than in the personal qualifications of nominees.

By 1921, three fourths of the civil service was under the merit system. However, only in some of the technical bureaus of departments like Agriculture, Commerce, or Interior, and in the special case of the Department of State, did career men occupy positions at the very top of the ladder. In most agencies there was plenty of room at the top for political appointees, and the issue of control was not raised except by a few Republican extremists. The Harding administration was formally pledged to maintenance and extension of the merit system, and several of the new cabinet members were firm supporters of this principle. The President himself, with his congressional background, was more sympathetic to the arguments for patronage, and some of his associates—most notably Harry Daugherty—were openly in favor of returning to a spoils system. In his first year, Harding took several overt steps to increase the area of patronage, but found that he could not go far in that direction without arousing opposition. For the service as a whole, the proportion of employees under merit was not significantly changed. The actual impact of the party overturn varied from department to department. In the Departments of State, Commerce, Agriculture, and probably the Post Office (at least as long as Will Hays remained there), the merit system was strengthened. The traditionally more "political" agencies, like the Departments of Interior and Justice and the nonfiscal bureaus of the Treasury, became more political than ever, regardless of the technicalities.

President Harding's administrative methods were closely related to his personality and, political philosophy. In his way, Harding was a con-

scientious President—so much so, in fact, that he often became bogged down in minor ceremonial tasks and administrative routine. His tendency, however, was to concentrate on details while larger matters escaped him. In contrast to the alleged tendency of Wilson to surround himself with yes-men and dominate their every action, Harding sought to be the patient moderator of a regime of eminent, wise, and able men. Sitting as a cabinet, and taking full account of the wishes of the party, these men were to agree on policies that would be not merely the President's, but the administration's; once policies were arrived at, all would of course support them enthusiastically. This hope to make the cabinet a deliberative, decision-making body soon faded, but Harding continued to rely heavily on individual department heads for most of the initiative on policies in their respective bailiwicks. Having confidence in his subordinates, he supported them before the outside world and did not inquire closely into their day-to-day activities. The Harding approach to administration was highly successful with such cabinet members as Herbert Hoover and Charles Evans Hughes, but it had tragic results when applied to Harry Daugherty and Albert Fall.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE WORLD

Back in 1913 it had been possible for an intelligent and conscientious man like Wilson to approach the Presidency with the easy assumption that the conduct of foreign affairs would be a relatively small part of the job, which he could handle without difficulty as occasions arose. President-elect Harding could harbor no such illusions. The war had left a legacy of complicated relationships with all the major powers and forced the realization that events in any part of the world could affect the United States. Despite a bitter debate, the election of 1920 had not even produced a clear decision on the general direction of foreign policy, let alone answers to the specific problems looming ahead. But the new President would somehow have to arrive at answers and negotiate with foreign nations toward settlements that a suspicious, aggressive Congress might accept. Preliminary talks with other party leaders produced no consensus. Harding appointed the man he considered the most clear-headed in the party as his Secretary of State and hoped for the best.

The choice proved to be a most fortunate one, as Hughes led the ad-

ministration through a hectic year of diplomatic and political maneuvering. Relying heavily on the career men in the Department of State and the foreign service, Hughes maintained a high degree of continuity and stability in policy outside the main areas of controversy. Then, after he and Harding had explored the situation and come to a decision about the political limits within which they had to operate, he executed a clean turnaround of American policy toward the League of Nations and the Versailles Treaty. This was followed by successful leadership of a world disarmament conference that placed what seemed to be the politically necessary course on a high plane of principle, accepted and even applauded by most other nations. It may have added up to disengagement, but it was brilliantly done.

A MAN, A THEORY, AND A SITUATION

Even before Harding's untimely death, most observers were counting him a failure as a party and legislative leader, and the judgment has become almost unanimous with the passing years.[3] At the beginning Harding was popular and the Republicans held a sizable congressional majority, but these assets were not exploited. Even when carrying out their platform and campaign pledges, the Republicans seemed indecisive and contentious. Party discipline was weak, especially in the Senate, where the increasingly powerful farm bloc rode roughshod over the formal leadership. Harding apparently hoped to prolong the presidential-congressional honeymoon by refraining from consummating the marriage. When he finally tried to assert himself, it was too late and at an ill-chosen moment. In the end, Congress largely ignored him.

On what factors should this unproductive record be blamed? It is probably impossible to separate the effects of Harding himself, the prevailing constitutional doctrine, and the particular situation of the time. Each factor supplemented the other two.

Harding's inadequacies must account for some of the failure. He was essentially a man of limited capacity, with a weak grasp of the issues of his time. Conscious of his own deficiencies and wanting desperately to be popular, he hesitated to assert his will and was often indecisive in critical situations. He had nothing like Wilson's capacity to inspire other

[3] Malcolm Moos, *The Republicans* (1956), Chap. 13.

politicians with confidence in his judgment or enthusiasm for a common effort.

Harding was also a captive of the theory of his time and his party that encouraged the President to take a narrow view of his powers. He did not completely abdicate in favor of the Senate, as many had predicted on the basis of his previous record and the circumstances of his nomination; his conscientiousness and the alarms sounded by the press stopped that. Actually, Harding was fairly systematic about making policy recommendations to Congress through the channels in use in his time, but expectations had changed since 1913. Types of communication with Congress that had been bold and effective innovations when Wilson used them were now routine and had no special impact. And Harding was committed in advance not to use the powers of his office or his advantage in public opinion to bring reluctant congressmen into line. The President would propose and the Congress would dispose. If Congress chose not to act—well, that was not the President's problem.

But it is difficult to say with certainty that a more able President with a more positive concept of the Presidency would have succeeded where Harding failed. To a considerable extent Harding was a product of his time; neither the country nor Congress was in a mood to respond to hard-driving leadership. The Republican old guard in Congress was aging and had forgotten how to support an administration. Eastern conservative Republicans and western agrarian Republicans had too little in common. A forthright presidential attempt to take charge, unless done with great skill, might have stirred Congress into open rebellion and snapped the few tenuous threads that held the Republicans together. To bring the country out of its postwar malaise and unify the Republican party required something of a miracle, and Harding was no miracle man.

PART FOUR

THE HOOVER–ROOSEVELT TRANSITION, 1932-1933

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterward."

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER 21

FDR

It was November 9, 1932, the morning after election. President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt sat in bed in his house on East 65th Street in New York City, reading a telegram. His recent opponent, President Herbert Hoover, offered congratulations on his "opportunity to be of service to the country," and pledged ". . . every possible effort . . . in the common purpose of us all."[1]

On the back of the message FDR began drafting a reply: "I appreciate your generous telegram. I want to assure you that subject to my necessary executive duties as Governor, I hold myself in readiness to cooperate with you in our—"

At that point he stopped. Striking out the offer "to cooperate with you," he chose a phrase with a different shade of meaning, and wrote: ". . . I hold myself ready to further in every way the common purpose to help our country."[2]

His caution was both characteristic and portentous.

Roosevelt, a Democrat, was on his way to the White House to end twelve years of Republican control. He faced an awesome responsibility, for the nation was in the depths of the great depression. President Hoover had hardly been inaugurated in 1929 before the economic danger signs that had been nagging throughout the 1920's began to multiply. Then came the stock market crash and the rapid downward spiral.

[1] *New York Times* (Nov. 9, 1932).

[2] James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (1956), pp. 144-45, recreates the incident, based on an examination of the original documents.

As business activity declined, unemployment rose, and the first signs of mass deprivation appeared, the disadvantaged and fearful millions fixed their resentment on the man in the White House. At first optimistically, then grimly, and finally desperately, Hoover had struggled against the tide, but he had been bombarded with conflicting advice, harassed by an unruly Congress, and almost handcuffed by his own theories of political and economic morality. Some experts thought that the economy was picking up a little in the summer of 1932, but it was hardly perceptible to the general public. This was the year of 12 million unemployed, the farm holiday movement in the West, and the bonus army in Washington. Even levelheaded men could see the specter of revolution in America.[3]

But for the time being at least, the only revolution was at the ballot box. Hoover ran again, not merely seeking vindication but confident that his policies would lead to economic recovery if people only acted sensibly and had a little patience. It was no use. Democratic propagandists called him a "do-nothing" President, and the label stuck. Democrats of all kinds, Independents, Republicans of the progressive tradition, and even some Republicans with straight-ticket antecedents going back to the McKinley era—all rallied around the Democratic candidate, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York. It might be difficult to tell from Roosevelt's speeches what he proposed to do, but he promised action, and his manner gave confidence that he would be an improvement on dour Mr. Hoover. He rolled up a popular vote of 22 million to Hoover's 15 million, carrying 42 states. The Democrats also won impressive victories in state and local races, and in the Congress to open in March, they would have full control of both houses for the first time since 1919.

NO HASTY MOVES

The national verdict had been rendered, but it would be four months before the new administration could take over. The day after election

[3] For extensive and opposing views of the depression and the national situation in 1932, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957) and Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 3 (1952). Harris Gaylord Warren, *Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression* (1959) is a useful treatment, critical but not altogether unsympathetic to Hoover.

there was newspaper speculation that in view of the national situation, Hoover might appoint Roosevelt Secretary of State and then resign and let Roosevelt become President immediately under the Succession Act, just as Wilson had contemplated giving way to Hughes if he had lost in 1916.[4] But Hoover apparently did not seriously consider the idea. Instead, he telephoned back to Washington from California, where he had gone to vote in his home precinct, instructing members of the cabinet to explore "avenues of constructive action" in "the area apparently outside of conflict between the incoming and outgoing administrations."[5]

Roosevelt was in no position to accept the Presidency immediately even if Hoover had offered it. His term as governor of New York ran through December 31, and he had made no arrangements for early resignation. While he appeared to be exhilarated rather than exhausted by the campaign, a rest also was clearly indicated. He planned to spend a few days later in the month at his health resort at Warm Springs, Georgia, and to take a more extended vacation, at Warm Springs or elsewhere, after relinquishing the governorship.

More important than FDR's personal unreadiness was his political and administrative unreadiness. Thousands of messages were pouring in and must be acknowledged or answered. The political organization that had produced the Democratic nomination and then the electoral victory had to be dismantled, some parts of it converted into an administration, and the remainder put on a stand-by basis. Congress would convene in less than four weeks, creating both opportunities and pitfalls for the newly ascendant national leader. From the party platform, his campaign speeches, and the hundreds of ideas being urged on him, Roosevelt must not only choose the ingredients and establish the priorities of a program but must also find or cause to be drafted the necessary bills and orders. And if all this was to proceed smoothly, hundreds of people must be seen and negotiated with, many of them by no less a person than FDR himself.

The newspapers suggested that even if Roosevelt could not be inaugurated before March, he could announce his cabinet appointments immediately. This would be a means of getting his administration well organized in advance and would also be a gesture of leadership to the

[4] Washington *Evening Star* (Nov. 9, 1932).

[5] William Starr Myers and Walter H. Newton, *The Hoover Administration: A Documented Narrative* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 275.

country. Roosevelt, however, soon spiked the suggestion.[6] During the campaign he had occasionally given a little thought to the composition of a cabinet, but he was far from ready to make final decisions. Cabinet formation would have to proceed in close connection with the other political negotiations of the pre-inaugural period. For the time being, no one but the President-elect would be invested with authority.

ROOSEVELT'S RESOURCES

This did not, of course, mean that FDR would have to do everything directly and personally. In one sense, the resources at his disposal were enormous if he cared—or could get organized—to use them. He had, in addition to the Democratic campaign organization and his staff in Albany that would be available until January 1, twenty years' accumulation of friends, advisers, and political allies. His capacity for maintaining direct communication with all sorts of people, stirring their enthusiasm and enlisting them in his enterprises, was already well developed. Hundreds of people who had served him in the past would be delighted to serve him again; his problem was which ones, if any, to choose and to trust.

Roosevelt's senior aide was Louis McHenry Howe, a gnarled little man who had literally spent the last twenty years making his friend President of the United States. A shrewd schemer, Howe assumed much of FDR's burden of correspondence and political negotiation. As a personal friend and more or less permanent house guest of the Roosevelt family, Howe could—and often did—disagree directly and openly with his chief, but he was unsurpassed both in loyalty to FDR and in jealousy of anyone who might come between them. Howe's headquarters were the cramped offices of the original "Friends of Roosevelt" on Madison Avenue in New York City, from which he had staged the campaign for the nomination.[7]

Other long-time friends and associates of the President-elect who had participated in the "Friends of Roosevelt" movement were Roosevelt's former law partner, Basil "Doc" O'Connor; the Democratic leader of

[6] *New York Times* (Nov. 11, 1932).

[7] Lela Stiles, *The Man Behind Roosevelt* (1954), is a biography of Howe with emphasis on the campaign period.

the Bronx and New York Secretary of State, Edward J. Flynn; and such lawyers and businessmen as Frank C. Walker, William H. Woodin, Jesse I. Straus, and Joseph P. Kennedy. These and other men of prominence had already spent much time and money in Roosevelt's behalf and could be relied on for confidential advice and assistance in the future.[8]

Holding forth at the national campaign headquarters at the Hotel Biltmore was the Democratic National Chairman, James A. Farley. On the advice of both Howe and Flynn, Roosevelt had picked Farley to be New York Democratic chairman and principal outside man in the campaign for the nomination. After Roosevelt's nomination at the convention in Chicago, Farley had assumed control of the national party organization, which included the Democratic publicity chief, Charles Michelson, and several experienced politicians collected from all over the country for the duration of the campaign.[9]

For day-to-day assistance in Albany, Roosevelt had relied heavily on Samuel I. Rosenman, a young lawyer who served as governor's counsel, bill-drafter, speech-writer, and general factotum for state affairs. Toward the end of his term, Roosevelt had appointed Rosenman to the New York State supreme court. Although he had been active in the campaign, Rosenman intended to remain in New York and gradually receded in Roosevelt's entourage after the election. More important to Roosevelt's immediate future were several of the state department heads in whom he put special confidence. These included Flynn, already mentioned; the commissioner of labor, Miss Frances Perkins; and the commissioner of conservation, also FDR's personal friend and neighbor, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Marguerite (Missy) LeHand and Grace Tully were Roosevelt's experienced, loyal personal secretaries.

Another set of assistants that had been of increasing usefulness to Roosevelt in the previous several months was the so-called Brain Trust. In the spring of 1932, with the preconvention campaign looming ahead, Roosevelt and his aides felt a need for a new type of help. The organization as it then stood seemed adequate for running New York State and the strictly political job of pursuing convention delegates, but weak on the complicated national issues on which a candidate would

[8] Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph* (1956), pp. 170-72, discusses the formation of the "Friends." See also Edward J. Flynn, *You're The Boss* (1957).

[9] James A. Farley, *Behind the Ballots* (1938); Charles Michelson, *The Ghost Talks* (1944).

have to speak and take positions. In hope of developing some fresh approaches to national problems, and in order to avoid the dangers of taking unsound positions through lack of knowledge or putting Roosevelt in the hands of advisers who might use him for purposes of their own, Rosenman and O'Connor suggested calling in some academic people to prepare material and help Roosevelt think his way through the issues. Roosevelt agreed; he had already made good use of experts and professors on a number of occasions. The man chosen to lead the group was Raymond Moley, a Columbia University political scientist who had advised Roosevelt occasionally on problems of crime and law enforcement, which was his special field of interest. Professor Moley was not a complete neophyte in practical politics; he had worked for Al Smith at Democratic headquarters in 1928 and had dabbled in New York politics long before that.[10]

In consultation with Rosenman and O'Connor, Moley worked up a list of subjects to be covered and began calling on his acquaintances, mostly from Columbia, for memoranda. The advisers later were taken by ones and twos for long conferences with Roosevelt. Some were dropped quickly, and others were used only occasionally in their particular fields, but two who proved especially versatile were called more and more frequently to Albany. These were Rexford G. Tugwell, an economist, and Adolph Berle, Jr., a law professor. As the campaign for the nomination progressed, Moley, Tugwell, and Berle expanded Roosevelt's grasp of economic issues and became the nucleus of a research and speech writing team. After the convention the group was augmented by the incongruous addition of General Hugh S. Johnson, a colorful retired army officer, writer, and businessman who had been associated with Bernard Baruch. Moley and the others returned to their teaching duties after election but were available on Roosevelt's call; his special needs during the pre-inaugural period were to project them into new prominence.

In addition to the inner group of staff members and regular advisers, there were many others who might be called on for help of various kinds. There were such men as Colonel Edward M. House, who still enjoyed a reputation for behind-the-scenes power exercised in Wilson's presidency; financiers like Bernard Baruch; professors like Felix Frank-

[10] Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939) is Moley's account of his experiences with Roosevelt. Although written in a mood of disillusionment, it is comprehensive and rich in illuminating detail. Even with its limitations, it remains perhaps the most useful single book on the Hoover-to-Roosevelt transition.

furter; political veterans of the Wilson era like Josephus Daniels, Daniel Roper, Swagar Sherley, and Homer Cummings; and special allies in Congress like James F. Byrnes of South Carolina and Lewis W. Douglas of Arizona. In addition to such frequent and relatively intimate advisers, hundreds of other politicians and businessmen, old family friends and leaders of Washington and New York society, reformers and intellectuals—people of all degrees of expertness and disinterestedness—were drawn to the President-elect. His problem was to use this talent without committing himself unwisely or incurring obligations that would embarrass him later.

There was also, one hastens to add, the President-elect's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. In the months immediately following her husband's election, she busied herself with personal and family affairs and did not assume the prominence that was hers later on. But at all times, without presuming to do her husband's thinking for him, she exerted a steadying influence and served his career in many important ways. "No one, indeed," noted Tugwell in a sympathetic comment on their relationship, "will ever be able to understand Franklin very well without understanding Eleanor as well."[11]

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Even after the campaign and all the publicity, the American people hardly knew what to make of their President-elect. Ordinary citizens and shrewd political observers alike—even some of his close associates—entertained conflicting impressions of the quality of the man and the courses he would pursue. The Roosevelt smile and the warm, resonant radio voice were now familiar to the nation, but what lay behind them? His origins in the Hudson River aristocracy, private school and Harvard education, and secure financial and social position hardly suggested a man of great insight into the problems and aspirations of the common people. Yet he had managed during the campaign to reach the people in a way that Hoover, who embodied the Horatio Alger myth, had never done. It was known that Roosevelt had had infantile paralysis and had lost the use of his legs. The public was sympathetic and yet a little

[11] Rexford G. Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt (1957), p. 59. (© 1957 by Rexford Guy Tugwell.) Quotations from this book are reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.

repelled by the idea of a President in a wheelchair. He had nerve, no doubt, but could a man help being warped somehow by that experience? What was he trying to prove?

Since 1928, Roosevelt had been governor of New York—a competent, progressive, and popular governor but not, after Al Smith, a terribly exciting one. Detaching himself from Smith's legacy and working with a Republican-controlled legislature on the problems of the early depression years had been a delicate piece of business. Political professionals could appreciate the skill it had taken to make a success of the governorship and simultaneously advance his presidential ambitions. However, Roosevelt's ambitions had been so obvious, and his caution on a number of occasions so well publicized, that many people rated him as an opportunist with no sense of principle. Walter Lippmann, earlier in 1932, had written him off as ". . . a pleasant man, who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be President."[12] Even most of Roosevelt's friends, as one biographer says, ". . . expected no more of him than that he would be a good president."[13] Only a few fully appreciated his sense of political destiny, the tough core beneath his amiability, and the depth and spread of his political roots.

FDR arrived at the top after a large amount of first-class political experience. Although belonging to a traditionally Democratic branch of the Roosevelt family, he had been influenced in his youth by "Uncle Ted" (actually a cousin), then at the height of his career. FDR got into politics himself in 1910 as an anti-Tammany Democrat in the New York State legislature. He threw himself into the Wilson cause in 1912 and was rewarded with an appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy—a post of real political and administrative significance in 1913. Seven years of seasoning just below the top governmental level were capped by an unexpected nomination for Vice President and the grueling but futile campaign of 1920. Wilson was still in eclipse as a historical figure in 1932, but the experiences and acquaintances of the Wilson years were an important part of the equipment of the President-elect. He cherished TR's and Wilson's concept of the vigorous, initiating Presidency, but tempered it with patience and determination to avoid the inflexibility that had contributed to Wilson's downfall.

In 1921 came Roosevelt's illness, from which he returned to physical

[12] Quoted by Tugwell, *ibid.*, p. 222.
[13] Freidel, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

vigor and active political life with reserves of confidence and courage to supplement his attractive personality. During his eight years out of public office, he maintained a large political correspondence and was active in the internal affairs of the Democratic party. Through personal and business activity he also acquired experience and friends in Wall Street, farming, labor, small business, and other diverse realms of American life. People who met Roosevelt were impressed by the breadth of his information; intellectuals were usually delighted at the facility with which he picked up and used ideas. The President-elect was obviously a man of great ability, versatility, and persuasiveness, even if one could not clearly make out his purposes.[14]

Once nominated, Roosevelt had campaigned cautiously as befitted the front runner. In personal appearances and private conversations he had exercised his great charm and talent for making people feel that he understood their problems. In his speeches he had hammered at the Hoover record of failure to cope with the depression, insisting that he and the Democrats would give the people leadership and action. Thus the phrase "new deal" was written indelibly into the political dictionary.

In general, the Roosevelt approach was progressive. He spoke of relief for distressed farmers and the unemployed, better land use, putting unemployed youths to work in the forests, reform of banking and securities marketing practices, strict regulation of public utilities, and public ownership of power facilities in special cases. He also spoke on occasion of restoring purchasing power, of a national program to give economic equality to agriculture, and establishing an "economic constitutional order" in which every man would have the right to earn a decent living.

During the campaign Hoover tried to picture Roosevelt as dangerously radical, but without much success. Many of Roosevelt's ideas had been the common property of progressives and conservationists for at least a generation. Even the unorthodox ideas picked up from his Brain Trust advisers did not sound very radical the way he stated them, usually in terms of neighborliness, common sense, and old-fashioned morality.[15]

[14] Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-57, summarizes important aspects of FDR's personality and the great variety of men and ideas in the Roosevelt movement.

[15] "The conservatives could pass them off as the meaningless rhetoric of a political campaigner, and the liberal intellectuals could doubt that he really understood their implications or intended to apply them in specific action. This was all to Mr. Roosevelt's political advantage." Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (The Viking Press, 1933), p. 37.

Late in the campaign, he reassured conservatives by criticizing unnecessary government interference with business, emphasizing his belief in sound currency, and attacking the Hoover record of budgetary deficits; he promised a balanced budget with a 25 per cent reduction in federal expenditures.

Foreign policy issues were not prominent in the 1932 campaign. Despite their earlier internationalism, both candidates took the position that joining the League of Nations was a dead issue. On the whole, Roosevelt took a more isolationist position than Hoover. He scoffed at Hoover's well-known concern for foreign loans and world trade and at Hoover's attempts to explain the depression in terms of international dislocations. He emphasized his determination to collect the World War debts owed to the United States by European countries, inferring that Hoover was "soft" on this subject and appealing to the isolationist Republicans of the West and Midwest. On the tariff, Roosevelt was, as Hoover said, "a chameleon on plaid." Caught between two wings of his party, he attacked the high Smoot-Hawley rates on the one hand and tried to reassure protectionists on the other, finally coming out for tariff reduction by reciprocal agreements with other countries.

On one major point, both Roosevelt and the Democratic platform were clear: the Eighteenth (prohibition) Amendment would be repealed!

After the event, many of Roosevelt's associates claimed that the New Deal was foreshadowed by Roosevelt's gubernatorial career and his presidential campaign speeches. This may be true, but on the day after election the shadows seemed to fall in various, sometimes opposite, directions. Roosevelt may himself have known approximately where he wanted to go, but his sense of direction was not fully apparent to the public or his fellow politicians. Having won the election and preserved his freedom of choice on most important matters, his situation encouraged dissimulation, for the time being.

DEEPENING TWILIGHT

As usual, the immediate post-election period was calm, as politicians and citizens alike relaxed from the excitement of the campaign and made plans for the future. Roosevelt left his supporters celebrating in New York City on the day after election and returned to Albany to take care

of long-deferred state business and to start cleaning up his affairs. Senator Byrnes, one of the leading Democratic campaign strategists, was already in Washington, said to be exploring on Roosevelt's behalf what could be accomplished in the rapidly approaching lame duck session of Congress. Howe, in Roosevelt's name, was acknowledging letters and telegrams. Farley presided over the liquidation of the campaign establishment and juggled lists of jobs and men. The professors returned to their classes and enjoyed, as Moley said, an interlude of infinite peace. President Hoover planned a few days of badly needed rest in California.

After election, economic conditions took a turn for the worse—ample proof, Hoover thought, of his assertions that Roosevelt was undermining business confidence. The prospects were for a grim winter. With a total labor force of about 50 million workers, estimates of unemployment ranged from 12 to 13 million, and would reach 15 million before spring. Private charity and state and local government relief funds were rapidly becoming exhausted, and the modest federal aid available through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation seemed to have little impact. Prices, wages, and tax receipts dropped lower and lower. While income dried up, debt gradually crushed farmers, businessmen, banks, and governments. In the West, committees of farmers carrying shotguns and dangling nooses from barn doors intimidated sheriffs and blocked tax sales and foreclosures. The creeping paralysis of bank failures moved on from the marginal institutions to attack solid-looking establishments. Protest movements—left, right, and unclassifiable—mushroomed here and there, providing an ominous backdrop to the events between election and inauguration day.

The guarantee of a change of administrations seemed to stir a few ripples of hope. But how was the country to be held together until March? Hoover was a political leper. There were men of real ability in Congress, but they had been unable to pull together so far, and there was little reason to think that they could do so now. Roosevelt was friendly and optimistic, but noncommittal and obviously planning no sudden moves. The public, congressmen, bureaucrats, lobbyists, politicians at home and abroad, and—in spite of himself—President Hoover, eyed the freshly filled reservoir of political power in Albany.

CHAPTER 22

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: THE POLITICS OF CONTINUITY

An impulse from abroad shattered the post-election calm and stirred the major figures into action. Two days after election, the British ambassador appeared at the State Department with a note requesting immediate discussion of possible "adjustment" of his government's World War I debt to the United States; suspension of a payment due on December 15 also was requested, pending the outcome of the talks. Other European ambassadors bearing similar notes soon followed.

This reopened a subject with a long history and many economic and political ramifications. The original war debts had been sharply scaled down in adjustments during the 1920's, but most European governments still found it financially difficult, as well as politically unpopular at home, to make their scheduled payments. Great Britain, France, and the other former allies continually reminded the United States of their inability to collect reparations from Germany, of the high tariffs that made it difficult for them to earn funds in American markets, and of financial problems caused by the depression. While there was some American sympathy with the debtors, particularly in traditionally "internationalist" circles along the eastern seaboard, the prevailing public attitude was one of disgust with the constant pressure for further adjustments.

The Hoover administration, although insisting that the debts were valid obligations that must eventually be met, had conceded that the depression made regular payments difficult. In 1931, Hoover had persuaded a reluctant Congress to authorize a one-year moratorium on payments. He also had recommended establishment of a joint legislative-

executive commission to restudy the entire war debt issue, but Congress had turned this down with a resolution of opposition to any further reductions or delays in payment. The December payments mentioned in the new notes were to be the first ones after the moratorium. The administration had not really expected any difficulty about these, although it had anticipated further discussion of the debts in connection with a World Monetary and Economic Conference scheduled to meet in London sometime early in 1933. When all the economic issues were on the table, debt adjustments might be traded for European concessions in a deal that could be justified to a suspicious United States Congress.

This sudden concerted request for immediate negotiations created a serious problem for the Hoover administration. The timing was awkward and could be interpreted cynically as an effort to take advantage of the American political overturn and neutralize the main bargaining advantage the United States would have in London. Yet the appeal could not be casually brushed aside because of the implicit threat that an unsympathetic response would force (or provide a plausible excuse for) a default on the December payments. From the viewpoint of the Hoover administration, default was to be avoided if at all possible. Aside from the loss to the Treasury, it would be a sign of failure of the administration's diplomacy and a serious blow to international trade, credit, and that intangible but all-important thing called "confidence." It was better, perhaps, to negotiate than to allow default. However, the tough attitude of Congress on the debts left the administration little room for maneuver.

AN UNEXPECTED INVITATION

The Secretary of State who received the British note was Henry L. Stimson, who had played a role in an earlier transition as Secretary of War in the Taft cabinet. Stimson already was musing over the fate that had put him twice in this position and recalling the things he had done in 1913 to facilitate the turnover to the Wilson administration.[1] The day before he had noted in his Diary:

[1] Henry L. Stimson, Diary (Unpublished ms. in The Henry L. Stimson Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University), entry Nov. 7, 1932. For Stimson's policies as Secretary of State, his relations with President Hoover, and the background of the war debts and other related issues, see Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, Vol. 1 (1947), pp. 190-288.

> The first problem is to make sure that whoever comes in as Secretary of State after me shall have a fair chance to understand the policies we have been working out during this time, and as far as possible, not do something to reverse them unnecessarily. This is what we will have to do this winter in trying to smooth out the difficulties.[2]

On receiving the British request, Stimson called in the Secretary of the Treasury, Ogden Mills, and they telephoned the news to Hoover, who was still in California. It was agreed to take the unprecedented step of consulting the President-elect at once.[3] Stimson and Mills transmitted a draft letter to Hoover, who kept it for two days while he made many revisions and telephone calls back to Washington.[4] The message was finally telegraphed to Roosevelt on the evening of November 12, from Yuma, Arizona, as Hoover's train returned to Washington. Significantly, Hoover released it to the press at the same time.

In the long message, Hoover reported to Roosevelt the recent British and other notes and reviewed at length the background of executive and congressional action on the debt problem. He pointed out that if discussions were opened, they would probably extend beyond his administration. Furthermore, the possibilities for negotiation were sharply limited by the resolution of Congress, "and if there is to be any change in the attitude of the Congress it will be greatly affected by the views of those members who recognize you as their leader and who will properly desire your counsel and advice." Said Hoover:

> I am prepared to deal with the subject as far as it lies in the power of the Executive, but it must be our common wish to deal with this question in a constructive fashion for the common good of the country. I am loath to proceed with recommendations to the Congress until I can have an opportunity to confer with you personally. . . .

Noting the reports that Roosevelt would soon be traveling to the South, Hoover invited him to stop at Washington for a conference on the

[2] Stimson, Diary, entry Nov. 9, 1932.

[3] *Ibid.*, entry Nov. 10, 1932.

[4] Stimson feared that Hoover would ". . . destroy the point which I regard as absolutely essential, namely magnanimity. The President still has the aroma of battle on him. . . ." *Ibid.*, entry Nov. 11, 1932.

The following day: "Mills and I are . . . much troubled by the President's delay in sending off the telegram to Roosevelt. He has got our draft in his hands, and he is mulling over it and putting in modifications arising out of his former position until I am afraid that he will make the whole telegram an apology for his past position instead of keeping his eye on the getting of the thing settled and getting Roosevelt to take it up. However, we have done our best and all we could do to prevent him from going his own way. *Ibid.*, entry Nov. 12, 1932.

debt problem. He suggested that Roosevelt might wish to bring with him some of the Democratic congressional leaders or other advisers.[5]

A Cautious Response

Hoover's telegram arrived in Albany on Sunday morning, November 13, touching off a day of hurried discussions among Roosevelt and his advisers.[6] Hoover's request was unprecedented, but this was not a time to stand on precedent. Since Hoover had made the request in public, Roosevelt must be responsive in some degree, for the effect on public opinion if for no other reason. On Monday, he telegraphed Hoover that he would be "delighted to confer with you in Washington." He suggested that the meeting be "wholly informal and personal." Since he had already arranged to see some of the Democratic leaders of Congress at Warm Springs, he said he would be glad to have Hoover's views and full information before meeting them. However, he suggested that Hoover also should see the congressional leaders ". . . because, in the last analysis, the immediate question raised by the British, French and other notes creates a responsibility which rests upon those now vested with executive and legislative authority."[7] The following day the details and the date, November 22, were arranged by telephone. The two principals were to have but one adviser each. Roosevelt asked Moley to prepare background material and to accompany him to the meeting.[8]

[5] Full text of the message is in William Starr Myers (ed.), *The State Papers and other Public Writings of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 2 (1934), pp. 483-86. (Cited hereafter as *Hoover State Papers.*)

When he saw the text of the message as sent, Stimson lamented: "He had changed it and included a great many things from the past, which I really had left out. . . . It took away the simple and magnanimous tone. . . . I am afraid it will have a bad effect." (Stimson, Diary, entry Nov. 13, 1932.)

After studying the press reports the following day, Stimson was considerably relieved: "The President's telegram did not make as bad an impression as I feared it might. On the contrary, the subject of co-operation, which really animated it, showed through in spite of the references to his own position." *Ibid.,* entry Nov. 14, 1932.

[6] Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), p. 68, says: "The President's telegram took us completely by surprise." This itself is a little surprising, since Hoover had been hinting at cooperation with Roosevelt in various informal statements since the election. Perhaps Moley was expecting Hoover's overture, if it came, to concern other subjects.

[7] Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Vol. 1 (1938), pp. 876-77. (Cited hereafter as *Roosevelt Public Papers.*) Hoover later recalled that he "did not like the ring of this disavowal of any responsibility for the Democrats in Congress." Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 3 (1952), p. 179.

[8] Being designated to attend the meeting with Hoover put Moley for the first time fully into the publicity spotlight, and there was a rash of background stories in the news-

Apprehension in Albany

Roosevelt and his advisers were apprehensive, for the effect of Hoover's invitation was to put Roosevelt in a difficult position. In the first place, this was a complicated problem, on which neither Roosevelt nor any of his immediate associates was well informed. Just the preparations for the meeting would occupy much valuable time, and there was no telling what demands might be made if Roosevelt got involved in further discussions. Second, Hoover obviously intended to ask Roosevelt to use his political credit in an unpopular cause and seek things from Congress that Hoover could not get unaided. In the prevailing political climate, any hint of "softness" on the war debts was likely to be construed as lack of patriotism; Roosevelt himself had exploited this popular prejudice during the campaign. If Roosevelt tried to help Hoover, he might diminish his own future influence with Congress. Third, while it was not clear just what Hoover would propose, he was obviously at least disposed to negotiate with the debtors, if not give them some adjustment. The Brain Trust advised Roosevelt that this policy faced the wrong direction. Unlike most of the academic economists and experts on the subject, they thought that the European countries could and should pay. They also suspected that a considerable part of the support that was appearing in the United States for the idea of adjusting the government-to-government debt resulted from Wall Street's desire to protect the European balances needed to service private debts. Finally, Moley and Tugwell saw in Hoover's telegram a basic policy assumption that they disagreed with. International finance was not, in their estimation, critical to the depression situation; the battle for recovery would have to be fought mainly at home. No matter what Hoover thought, the heavens would not fall if Britain simply defaulted. In sum, the Brain Trust cautioned Roosevelt about allowing himself to get involved with Hoover in this peripheral area, where there was little to gain but much to lose.[9]

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papers about this "mysterious" professor and the influence he was wielding over the President-elect. FDR's choice of Moley, rather than one of the acknowledged financial experts, was interpreted as a sign of his failure to take the debt problem seriously, almost an insult to Hoover.

[9] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72; Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), pp. 254-57.

While FDR went along with this advice, he characteristically took advantage of an opportunity to hedge the commitment. On November 16, three days after Hoover's letter, Roosevelt was visited by Louis B. Wehle, a New York lawyer whom he had known at Harvard and as a colleague in the Wilson administration. Wehle suggested that William Bullitt, another figure of the Wilson administration, who spent a great deal of time in Europe and had many contacts in high places, might take a quick trip abroad to see what European leaders were thinking about the war debts and other international problems. Roosevelt agreed, with the understanding that it would be Bullitt's private venture. However, he would be glad to see any reports Bullitt might send to Wehle. In late November and early December, reports of interviews with such top-level European statesmen as Edouard Herriot and Ramsay MacDonald began reaching Wehle and were relayed to FDR at Albany.[10]

Meeting and Misunderstanding

Arriving in Washington on November 22, Roosevelt and Moley were met at the railroad station by a White House limousine and soon ushered into the Red Room. Hoover and Secretary Mills (a Harvard classmate and Hudson Valley neighbor of Roosevelt's) greeted them stiffly.[11] After a Roosevelt pleasantry or two, Hoover plunged into a long exposition of the war debt problem. Roosevelt interrupted occasionally with questions from notes Moley had prepared for him.

Hoover outlined several principles of existing policy: (1) the debts were honest business obligations, not political debts; (2) each country and its debt was considered a separate matter; (3) so far as the United States was concerned, the debts had nothing to do with the ability of the debtors to collect reparations from Germany; but (4) account must

[10] Louis B. Wehle, *Hidden Threads of History* (1953), pp. 117-18. This volume is interesting as an illustration of the way FDR constantly used unofficial advisers and emissaries to supplement the official channels. While never closely identified with Roosevelt, and probably overestimating in his memoirs the influence he did have, Wehle popped in and out of FDR's office at strategic moments throughout his career. Wehle's access was perhaps enhanced by the fact that he was a nephew of Justice Louis D. Brandeis.

[11] "It was clear that you could have scoured the country without finding two people who distrusted Roosevelt—as a human being and as President-elect—more than that pair." Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Stimson also noted: "The President doesn't want to see him alone. He has been warned by so many people that Roosevelt will shift his words, that he wants some witnesses." (Stimson, Diary, entry Nov. 16, 1932.) Stimson apparently was excluded from the meeting by the agreement to have only one adviser on each side.

be taken of inability of any of the debtors to pay. With these principles Roosevelt expressed full agreement.

Then, Moley recalled, ". . . Mr. Hoover moved to one of those plausible generalizations into which he so frequently fell. Either cancellation *or* default . . . would shake international credit. And that would cause economic shivers to pass through this country."[12] To avoid this, Hoover asked Roosevelt to join him in recommending again to Congress the establishment of a legislative-executive commission to negotiate with the debtors. Since most of the negotiations would have to be handled by the new administration, he would let Roosevelt pick some or all of the executive appointees. If the outgoing and incoming administrations made this joint gesture of reasonableness, the United States would be in a good position to insist that the December 15 payments be made.[13]

What happened after that is not certain. Hoover thought that Roosevelt essentially agreed to his proposal. He realized that Roosevelt declined to join him in a public statement about the debts and in a meeting with the congressional leaders. However, Hoover understood that Roosevelt intended to see the legislators separately and to issue a public statement approving the Hoover proposal. Mills would see Roosevelt and Moley the next morning to coordinate the texts of the two statements.[14]

The request to join Hoover in tackling Congress was what Roosevelt had feared was coming. Moley, according to his own recollections, intervened with the observation that establishing a war debt commission would create new uncertainties and was as likely to impede as to speed recovery. Since working out possible adjustments would take several months anyway, why could not the Hoover administration begin preliminary discussions with each country through the normal diplomatic channels? This was clearly within the province of the Executive, regardless of Congress, and Roosevelt could pick up the matter after inauguration. Moley did indicate agreement with Hoover's other general princi-

[12] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[13] There is some confusion whether Hoover also proposed in this meeting to coordinate the debt talks with the preparations for the impending World Economic Conference by appointing the same men to both delegations. *Cf.* Hoover, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, p. 180; William Starr Myers and Walter H. Newton, *The Hoover Administration* (1936), pp. 282-83; Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86. Whether or not Hoover made this proposal directly to Roosevelt, it was clearly set forth in his press statement of the following day. *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 491.

[14] Hoover, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, pp. 180-81; Myers and Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 283; Stimson, Diary, entries Nov. 22 and 23, 1932.

ples and particularly with the position that the December 15 payments ought to be made. Roosevelt, Moley recalled, then expressed essentially the same views, and the meeting drew to a close with the understanding that Moley and Mills would meet the following day to compare the proposed Hoover and Roosevelt public statements. Concurrence on general principles about the debts "might indicate a sufficient degree of harmony to reassure the country," even though there was no agreement on the specific next steps.[15]

At the end, Moley and Mills withdrew. The President and President-elect had a brief private talk, which neither of them, so far as is known, has ever described. Roosevelt then went to the Mayflower Hotel, where he spent the evening in conference with various Democratic leaders of Congress. Before the evening was over, radio reports of what Roosevelt had told reporters after leaving the White House made Hoover doubt the President-elect's intentions.[16]

The next morning Mills appeared at the Mayflower with a draft statement setting forth Hoover's views on the war debts and suggesting that Congress establish the commission. After some conversation, Roosevelt said he had not had time to complete a statement because of his involvement with the legislators. He suggested that Hoover go ahead and release his statement, and he would issue his own later in the day. Mills departed.[17] Shortly thereafter, the White House released the Hoover statement.[18] Later in the day, Hoover also made his proposal for the war debt commission directly to the legislative leaders of both parties. He was rebuffed by the Democrats.[19]

After additional conferences with Democratic congressmen and a meeting with Admiral Cary Grayson, who had been designated chairman of the inauguration arrangements committee, Roosevelt and his party left that afternoon for Warm Springs. Moley, after some consultation with Bernard Baruch, polished the statement he had drafted the night before, cleared it with FDR, and released it from the train that evening. The announcement repeated the substance of Hoover's first four principles

[15] Moley, *op cit.*, pp. 72-77, contains his account.

[16] Stimson, Diary, entries Nov. 22 and 23, 1932.

[17] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78, describes the incident in some detail, including Mills' sour response to Roosevelt's jokes and his whispered plea to Moley to make Roosevelt take this seriously. *Cf.* Hoover, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, p. 182, who says that Mills ". . . was informed by Moley that the President-elect would not be able to see him. . . ."

[18] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 487-93.

[19] Hoover, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, pp. 180-81.

and then suggested diplomatic negotiation through normal channels, without mentioning the commission proposal. The December 15 payment problem, Roosevelt suggested, was a problem for those currently in authority.[20]

Thus the remarkable meeting, after an extensive publicity buildup, came to an undramatic and puzzling conclusion. In one sense, the apparent agreement on broad principles—including resistance to suspension of the December payments—indicated that the meeting had achieved its essential purpose. But many people had expected something more. Roosevelt's insistence that Hoover and the present Congress still bore the responsibility was a little disconcerting despite its obvious constitutional correctness. Disappointment with Roosevelt was sharpened in the succeeding days as the newspapers printed, and criticized editorially, the report that Roosevelt had quipped to the reporters that the debts were "not his baby."[21] Hoover felt that Roosevelt had made an agreement and then failed to keep it. Moley and Tugwell were elated to have helped their chief avoid a snare. Roosevelt, at least in later years, minimized the significance of the episode by saying merely that Hoover had wanted to place certain information before him, which he was glad to receive, without mentioning any misunderstanding with Hoover.[22]

Roosevelt went on to Warm Springs, where he spent a week and a half, partly in recreation and partly in conferences concerning the imminent congressional session. He was recalled to New York earlier than he had expected by a crisis in the municipal finances of New York City, which required a special session of the state legislature. He left Warm Springs on December 6 and returned directly to New York.

HOOVER TRIES AGAIN

After his unfruitful meeting with Roosevelt, Hoover could only tell the European governments that he was prepared to recommend to Con-

[20] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-88; *New York Times* (Nov. 24, 1932).

[21] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-89, quote at length several editorials lauding Hoover for his statesmanship and reproving Roosevelt for his flippancy.

[22] In an explanatory note in *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 867, FDR said: "Little discussion took place, as the principal objective of this meeting . . . was to put me in touch with the current international economic situation, partly in relation to foreign Government debts owed to the United States Government, but principally in relation to the international monetary problem. Domestic matters were not discussed, *and on the subject of foreign debts no tangible suggestion was forthcoming.*" (Italics added.)

gress the establishment of an agency to discuss the debts but that he had no authority to suspend the December 15 payments and would expect them to be made. A complicated exchange of diplomatic notes ensued. Eventually, Great Britain and several other nations did pay, while France and several others did not.[23] Unwilling to accept Hoover's denial of ability to deal with them, the debtors continued to press for some sort of discussions, but Hoover could see no point in conversations unless Congress, or the incoming administration, or both, could lend some authority to the negotiations.

By mid-December, Hoover had become acutely concerned about the Monetary and Economic Conference, for which a preliminary commission of experts had been meeting in Geneva during 1932. The American members, Edmund E. Day and John H. Williams, were home for consultations but scheduled to return to Europe late in December. Shortly thereafter, the preparatory commission would resume formal meetings, draw up an agenda for the conference, and set the opening date. Most of the participating nations were anxious to have the conference as early in 1933 as possible, but the presidential turnover made it uncertain when the United States could be ready.

As for the agenda, a primary fact of international economic life seemed to be the war debts. The United States had taken the formal position that these obligations of individual governments were not appropriate for multilateral discussion and should not be on the agenda. However, as the agenda took shape, the debt question was constantly just below the surface. What could be done with the items on the agenda seemed to depend greatly on what the United States was willing to do, in advance or on the side, about the debts. Day and Williams emphasized these points in their report to the Department of State.[24]

When Roosevelt's advisers saw this report they became quite alarmed, both at the prospect of a conference shortly after inauguration and at the possibility that the United States was being maneuvered into position for a debt reduction. Moley and Tugwell discussed the subject with Roosevelt on December 16, and Tugwell was instructed to talk to Day and Williams. He did so, and two days later took them to see Roose-

[23] In later years Hoover insisted that France would have paid had it not gained the impression that Roosevelt attached little importance to it. (Hoover, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, pp. 184-85.) This seems to overlook the fact that the French government was overturned for proposing to make a conditional payment.

[24] This report apparently was sent to Roosevelt by Secretary Stimson, about December 10.

velt.[25] After a brief discussion, the two experts agreed to suggest at the State Department that they delay their return to Europe and that the United States should try to postpone the conference as long as possible.

"I should be glad to know if you could join with me . . ."

To Hoover, the implicit connection of the debts and the economic conference was inevitable and acceptable. On December 17, he made a second approach to Roosevelt. He sent a telegram reminding the President-elect about the conference and suggested the desirability of having the delegation appointed as far in advance as possible, so that the members could be properly prepared. He also referred to the requests for debt talks and, in direct contradiction to the position Roosevelt had already taken, asserted that: ". . . Such problems as the exchange of views in respect to debts cannot be accomplished in a satisfactory manner through the ordinary routine of diplomatic contacts." The normal practice, Hoover said, was to appoint special delegations for such purposes. It also seemed ". . . clear that the successful outcome of the World Economic Conference will be greatly furthered if the debt problems can be satisfactorily advanced before that conference. . . ." Therefore he renewed his previous proposal to appoint a single delegation to handle both the debt talks and the representation at the economic conference. The delegation might include some members of Congress, and, to assure additional coordination, might also include some members from the American delegation to the World Disarmament Conference, which had been going on for some time at Geneva. While in normal times these matters might remain in abeyance until after March 4, the present situation seemed to Hoover to require more rapid action. He inquired: "I should be glad to know if you could join with me in the selection of such delegation at the present time or if you feel that the whole matter should be deferred until after March 4th."[26]

Hoover did not publicize this message. However, before receiving Roosevelt's reply, he sent a long message to Congress on December 19,

[25] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[26] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 554-56. Before dispatching the telegram, Hoover got Colonel House on the telephone and explained the whole thing, in hope that House would persuade Roosevelt to cooperate. Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 17, 1932. Nothing seems to have come of it.

reviewing the international economic situation, spelling out his proposed course of action at greater length, and indicating that he proposed "to seek the cooperation of President-elect Roosevelt in the organization of machinery for advancement of consideration of these problems."[27]

"I must respectfully suggest . . ."

The Brain Trusters could see in Hoover's proposal an implicit acceptance of the European position that debt adjustment would be the price of satisfactory decisions at the economic conference. This, commented Moley, was "like asking a man to pay admission to a gambling casino."[28] Roosevelt's answer, sent on the evening of the 19th, was that in his view the debts, the economic conference, and the disarmament conference should be handled separately. He reiterated his previous suggestion that preliminary discussion of the debts might begin through the normal diplomatic machinery: ". . . I must respectfully suggest that the appointing of the permanent delegates and the final determination of the program of the economic conference be held in abeyance until after March fourth. In the meantime I can see no objection to further informal conferences with the agenda committee. . . ." While he expressed appreciation for Hoover's courtesy in offering to let him name delegates, he said that his lack of authority prior to inauguration precluded his accepting any responsibility of this sort.[29]

Hoover was angry at Roosevelt's rebuff and started to draft a devastating reply. Stimson, although he thought "the telegram showed a most laughable, if it were not so lamentable, an ignorance of the situation in which Roosevelt is going to find himself when he gets in on March 4th," was not completely discouraged. ". . . I cannot but believe that with a little tact we can get him to yield on the main point yet. . . ." He and Mills advised Hoover to make a conciliatory response that would leave the door open. Their position was strengthened by the report of Day and Williams on their meeting with FDR. The two experts confirmed Stimson's suspicion that Roosevelt "really doesn't know what he

[27] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 553.

[28] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 87. Tugwell, *op. cit.*, p. 259, comments: "This was a program that was typical of Hoover; it was orderly and systematic. It was typical of him also that he believed any alternative to be unthinkable; any reasonable person would want to cooperate in carrying it out. That there might be alternative policies he could not conceive."

[29] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 557.

is up against," but seemed to agree that "if we convince him that we are in earnest, are playing fair, and are going to give him a free hand in the selection," he might yet be induced to join in appointing the multi-purpose delegation.[30]

"... I am unwilling to admit ..."

Thus prevailed on, Hoover made, on December 20, a renewed plea for FDR's cooperation. He assured the President-elect that he had no intention to embarrass him or to commit him to any particular policy but was merely trying to establish transitional machinery. In the urgency of the circumstances, Hoover was "unwilling to admit that cooperation cannot be established between the outgoing and incoming administrations which will give earlier solution and recovery from these difficulties." Even the impersonal talks suggested by Roosevelt should be participated in by men in the President-elect's confidence. Hoover closed by saying:

> With view to again making an effort to secure cooperation and that solidarity of national action which the situation needs, I would be glad if you could designate Mr. Owen D. Young, Colonel House, or any other men of your party possessed of your views and your confidence and at the same time familiar with these problems, to sit with the principal officers of this administration in endeavor to see what steps can be taken to avoid delays of precious time and inevitable losses that will ensue from such delays.[31]

That same day, Stimson had lunch with a Democratic congressman, Lewis W. Douglas. Douglas was close to Roosevelt; in fact, he had been with Roosevelt when Hoover's telegram of December 19 was received. Douglas agreed with Stimson that Roosevelt did not fully understand the urgency of the situation. Stimson promptly reported this to Hoover, and the two of them persuaded Douglas to telephone Roosevelt and urge him to accept the suggestion that Owen D. Young be designated for liaison between the two administrations. Before the day was over, however, Douglas reported that the reply would be negative.[32]

[30] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 20, 1932.
[31] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 557-58.
[32] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 21, 1932.

". . . For me to accept any responsibility . . ."

Roosevelt found Hoover's persistence a little puzzling, and the Brain Trust was irritated at Hoover's gratuitous suggestion that Roosevelt designate someone "familiar with these problems."[33] Roosevelt's reply to Hoover again explained his position. He agreed about the importance of these problems and that preliminary explorations ought to be started.

> However, for me to accept any joint responsibility in the work of exploration might well be construed by the debtor nations, collectively or individually, as a commitment—moral even though not legal, as to policies and courses of action. The designation of a man or men of such eminence as your telegram suggests would not imply mere fact-finding; it would suggest the presumption that such representatives were empowered to exchange views on matters of large and binding policy.

He suggested that Hoover designate representatives to handle preliminary work on the debts and the economic conference, "making it clear that none of these representatives is authorized to bind this government." If that were done, he would appreciate being kept informed of the discussions.[34]

Even after this second refusal, Hoover was inclined to try again and began drafting a third plea to FDR, but Stimson and others talked him out of it. They thought it clear that Roosevelt did not want to cooperate, and any further appeals by Hoover would make it appear that he was "trying to hang on to Roosevelt's coat tail when Roosevelt didn't want to be hung on to. . . ."[35] Hoover released his exchanges of telegrams with Roosevelt to the press, with the blunt comment that: "Governor Roosevelt considers that it is undesirable for him to assent to my suggestions for co-operative action. . . . I will respect his wishes."[36] In Albany, Roosevelt retorted with an angry press statement:

> I am rather surprised at the White House statement issued this afternoon. It is a pity, not only for this country but for the solution of world problems, that any statement or intimation should be given that I consider it undesirable to assent to co-operative action on foreign problems.
>
> I have made to the President the definite suggestion that he select his

[33] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89; Tugwell, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
[34] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 558-59.
[35] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 22, 1932.
[36] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 554.

representatives to make preliminary studies. I have asked to be kept advised as to the progress of these preliminaries. I have offered to consult with the President freely on these preliminaries.

I hope that this practical program and definite offer of co-operation will be accepted.[37]

"They made Roosevelt look like a peanut."

In the next few days, the pundits tried to unravel what had happened. It was all very complicated, but most of them thought Hoover had come off best. His proposal to establish machinery of cooperation seemed safe and sensible enough, and it was hard to see why Roosevelt was so skittish. Walter Lippmann, however, thought the whole proceeding "fantastic." Hoover and Roosevelt had been ". . . addressing complicated notes to each other, and proclamations, and messages, and newspaper statements, for all the world as if they were two governments and not two men."[38] Members of the administration were satisfied that they had done their best. Stimson, although he had often been irritated by Hoover's touchiness, confided to his diary that Hoover ". . . has shown up very well indeed in all this negotiation with Roosevelt. His letters have been dignified and on a high plane of unselfishness. They made Roosevelt look like a peanut."[39]

THE RAPPROCHEMENT

The angry eruption in the public press that followed Hoover's release of his correspondence with Roosevelt seemed to end any further possibility of high-level liaison between the two administrations. Yet, curiously enough, almost at the moment cooperation broke down, events were occurring that were soon to lead to its re-establishment, for a limited time and for limited purposes.

Hoover had been trying to establish cooperation at a higher level of visibility and specificity than Roosevelt thought he dared to go; much of his irritation with Hoover was based on a feeling that Hoover was being unrealistic and should have known better than to ask for so much.

[37] *New York Times* (Dec. 23, 1932).
[38] *New York Herald Tribune* (Dec. 28, 1932).
[39] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 21, 1932.

Yet Roosevelt was shrewd enough to realize that the public would probably consider his position untenable. He may also have had some private reservations about the policy of economic isolation and strict noninvolvement with Hoover that Moley and Tugwell, his principal advisers at that point, were urging on him. He probably was sincere in his insistence that he did recognize the importance of the subjects Hoover was raising, that he did want preliminary talks about the debts and the economic conference to begin, and that he would be happy to receive information and consult Hoover on these matters as long as neither he nor the government was being committed. At any rate, he took advantage of new opportunities to establish connections with the Hoover administration suitable for his purposes.

"Why doesn't Harry Stimson come up here . . .?"

The first new actor in the drama was Felix Frankfurter, the energetic Harvard law professor who was a frequent Roosevelt adviser on policy matters. Frankfurter also was a close friend of Secretary Stimson. Stimson's Diary tells the story of what happened on the same evening that Hoover and Roosevelt had their angry exchange of public statements:

> . . . Frankfurter called me up from Albany. He was at the Executive Mansion spending the night with Roosevelt. He said that in the middle of their conversation, which lasted about two hours, Roosevelt suddenly out of a clear sky said, "Why doesn't Harry Stimson come up here and talk with me and settle this damn thing that nobody else seems to be able to." And on that basis Frankfurter called me up. He said that if I would call up Roosevelt and ask him if something couldn't be done, he would invite me up there the day after Christmas to spend the night and we could talk it over. Frankfurter and I had quite a long talk over the telephone. He said that Roosevelt feels very badly that all co-operative efforts had been broken off. I told him that that was the way we felt down here and that we had gotten the impression that Roosevelt had his own plans and didn't want any co-operation. Altogether it was a funny occurrence.[40]

Stimson, who had until then played a secondary part in the administration's dealings with Roosevelt, was receptive to this indirect invitation to take a more active role. Never a great admirer of Hoover, Stimson had been differing with his chief with increasing frequency over

[40] *Ibid.*, entry Dec. 22, 1932.

the past year. While he, too, had been disgusted by Roosevelt's recent performance, he apparently suspected that he might succeed, where Hoover and Mills had failed, to make Roosevelt see the light.[41] The next morning he told the President about Frankfurter's telephone call.

Hoover, however, was unimpressed with the news and opposed to further involvement with Roosevelt—at least through Stimson as a channel. Hoover left Washington that afternoon for a ten-day Christmas holiday, and apparently fearing what Stimson might do while he was away, he left the Secretary written instructions.[42] Talks were not to be reopened unless Roosevelt accepted Hoover's invitation of December 20 to designate "men of eminence" to work with the administration; Roosevelt must also join in appointing a single delegation for debt talks and the economic conference. Hoover wrote:

> . . . I take this attitude simply because I do not wish our efforts minimized down to mere conversations which are being misrepresented on every occasion. . . .
>
> I realize Mr. Frankfurter's sincerity and his no doubt proper interpretation of Governor Roosevelt's chagrin to you, but the idea of any meetings between representatives of this Administration and Governor Roosevelt that are not public, in view of our experiences lead us only into further difficulties. . . .[43]

Frankfurter telephoned Stimson and other officials of the State Department several times that day to transmit Roosevelt's views on various matters connected with the economic negotiations. He also renewed the suggestion that Stimson see Roosevelt. Stimson, following Hoover's instructions, told Frankfurter that he could not do it; if Roosevelt wanted to establish a connection, he would have to send to Washington emissaries of proper standing, as Hoover had asked.[44]

On the third day Frankfurter called again, and Roosevelt also wrote a personal note to Stimson, ostensibly to let him know that he had talked with Day and Williams (which Stimson already knew). In closing, Roosevelt said: "I am very glad to be kept in touch with these preliminaries. If at any time you would care to talk things over with me, either

[41] For discussion of the growing divergence between Hoover and Stimson, which put the latter in a frame of mind to play his own, rather than Hoover's, hand in dealing with FDR, see Richard N. Current, *Secretary Stimson* (1954), pp. 92-116.

[42] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 23, 1932.

[43] Memorandum from Hoover to Stimson, Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21. The memorandum is undated, but from internal evidence and cross-references to it in Stimson's Diary, almost certainly was written on Dec. 23, 1932.

[44] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 23, 1932.

by telephone or *in person* [these words underlined in ink], it would make me very happy."[45]

Stimson was now convinced. However, he felt he could do nothing until the President got back.

> . . . I shall put it up to him very strongly, for it is to me incomprehensible that we should take a position which would deprive the incoming President of the United States of important information about foreign affairs, which he wishes apparently to get from me. . . .
>
> . . . We should give this man as fair a chance as possible. It would be the very narrowest and worst position in the world to try to prevent his getting such information in order to preserve the tactical position which we have obtained. . . .[46]

Frankfurter maintained the pressure with notes, telephone calls, and a visit to Washington on December 28, when he saw Stimson in person and conveyed a favorable impression of Roosevelt's attitude.[47]

Enter Norman Davis

About the same time Frankfurter moved to bring Roosevelt and Stimson together, other advisers and negotiators entered the situation. Bullitt returned from Europe and, when taken to FDR by Louis Wehle, strongly urged Roosevelt to take a position favorable to debt adjustments.[48] An even more significant figure appearing at this time was Norman H. Davis. Roosevelt had known Davis since the Wilson administration, in which Davis had served as Undersecretary of State. In that position, Davis had been instrumental in managing a smooth turnover to the Harding regime. Since then, although still labeled a Democrat, he had served in several special diplomatic posts. On December 22 he returned from Geneva, where he had been representing the United States at the disarmament conference and on the organizing commission for the economic conference. As he landed, he told reporters, with an air of certainty, that the preparatory commission of economic experts would make final arrangements in January and that the conference itself would begin in April. Davis also immediately telephoned Roosevelt and made an appointment to see him on December 26. Then he hurried to Washington and, in conferences with Stimson, strongly opposed Roosevelt's

[45] Roosevelt to Stimson, Dec. 24, 1932. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.
[46] Stimson, Diary, entry Dec. 24, 1932.
[47] *Ibid.*, entry Dec. 28, 1932.
[48] Wehle, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

earlier suggestion that Day and Williams stay away from the preparatory meeting in order to delay the conference as long as possible. By December 24th, it was decided in Washington that the two experts would stick to their original schedule and sail on the 28th.[49]

Tugwell, who had been keeping in touch with Day and Williams, became alarmed when he heard of this change of plans. On Christmas morning he telephoned FDR, who told him that since Davis was coming to Albany on the evening of the 26th, to stay overnight, Tugwell should bring Day and Williams up on the morning of the 27th, and they would all sit down and straighten it out.[50] Tugwell made these arrangements.

Davis, however, intervened again. Before leaving for Albany himself, he persuaded Day and Williams to remain in New York. Tugwell, learning of this, hurried to Albany alone, where he found that Roosevelt was already talking to Davis and unwilling to be disturbed. The next morning, Roosevelt told Tugwell that he had changed his mind about seeing Day and Williams again. Without giving specific instructions, he suggested that Tugwell and Davis go to New York and see them together. Left on their own, and both presuming to speak for Roosevelt, Davis and Tugwell compromised by advising Day and Williams to go ahead to the preparatory meeting but to oppose opening the conference in April. The two experts sailed the next day, still confused about the new administration's views on the substance of the conference.[51]

Davis reported to Stimson that after seeing Roosevelt he was convinced that the President-elect did sincerely want to have full and frank talks with Stimson or Hoover if it could be done without publicity.[52]

Hoover Grants Permission

When Hoover returned to Washington on January 3, Stimson lost no time in putting the proposition to him. Although at first wanting no one in the administration to have anything to do with that "very dangerous and contrary man," Hoover finally agreed to think about it. The next

[49] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91; Roosevelt to Stimson, Dec. 24, 1932, Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

[50] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. Moley was in Cleveland during this period and had no part in the maneuvering. His story, told in considerable detail, is apparently based on what Tugwell told him.

[52] This letter was apparently written with the idea that Stimson could show it to Hoover, for in a separate note, apparently sent at the same time, Davis offered to step in and urge Hoover to permit Stimson to see Roosevelt, if Stimson preferred not to suggest it himself. Two letters, Norman Davis to Stimson, both Dec. 28, 1932. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

day Stimson renewed the campaign and Hoover agreed that Stimson might go if Roosevelt would observe the formality of asking the President to authorize the meeting.[53] This intelligence was transmitted to Frankfurter. That evening Roosevelt sent a note to Hoover requesting "the privilege of discussing with the Secretary of State certain matters pertaining to the State Department." He sent a copy and a note to Stimson, saying, "It would be delightful if you could run up to Hyde Park to lunch with me next Saturday or Monday, if the President approves."[54]

Hoover announced to the press the following day that Roosevelt had requested discussions with the Secretary and that he had consented.[55] This gave Stimson some anxiety, as he feared Roosevelt would consider it a violation of the "no publicity" understanding, but a telephone call to Albany smoothed it over. The meeting was arranged for Monday, January 9.[56]

The Brain Trust worried about this development, particularly when Moley was not asked to sit in on the Roosevelt-Stimson meeting. They blamed it all on Davis' intervention, apparently having been oblivious to Frankfurter's activities.[57] Their discomfort was increased by newspaper speculation that Davis would serve as Roosevelt's liaison with the administration on foreign affairs and might become Secretary of State.

A Delightful Lunch

On January 9, Roosevelt and Stimson spent over five hours together. When they emerged, they would tell reporters nothing except that they had had a delightful lunch and discussion of "everything in relation to foreign affairs."[58] According to Stimson's memorandum of the meeting, the conversation ranged widely, with Roosevelt doing a good deal of thinking out loud. Although Stimson found him uninformed or misinformed on many important subjects, the President-elect was not difficult to talk to—more sympathetic than Hoover, in fact, on some of Stimson's problems.[59]

[53] Stimson, Diary, entries Jan. 3, Jan. 4, 1933.
[54] Roosevelt to Stimson, Jan. 4, 1933, Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.
[55] *New York Herald Tribune* (Jan. 6, 1933).
[56] Stimson, Diary, entry Jan. 5, 1933.
[57] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
[58] *New York Times* (Jan. 10, 1933).
[59] Henry L. Stimson, "Memorandum of Conversation with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mon-

The meeting bore fruit for Stimson almost immediately. On January 10, after much urging by Stimson, Hoover forwarded to Congress the Secretary's request for action either to ratify a Geneva convention of 1925 for the control of international trade in armaments, or to grant authority by legislation to embargo arms shipment to conflict areas.[60] The next day Roosevelt declined to comment specifically on the proposal but endorsed the general principle in terms that seemed even more enthusiastic than Hoover's.[61]

A few days later Stimson had an even greater success. After conferring with Roosevelt by telephone, he took occasion to restate the "Stimson Doctrine" of refusal to recognize the legality of Japanese territorial acquisitions on the Chinese mainland—a policy on which he had never had what he considered proper backing from Hoover. Stimson went so far as to hint that the policy would not be changed by the new administration. The following day, Roosevelt issued a statement specifically backing him on the point.[62]

Moley and Tugwell were dismayed at these internationalist commitments, and spent several hours on January 18, trying to show Roosevelt the danger he was in. Moley records:

> We might as well have saved our breath. Roosevelt put an end to the discussion by looking up and recalling that his ancestors used to trade with China. "I have always had the deepest sympathy for the Chinese," he said. "How could you expect me not to go along with Stimson on Japan?"
>
> That was all. It was so simple, so incredible, there could be no answer.[63]

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day, January 9, at Hyde Park, New York." Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21. Current *op. cit.*, pp. 117-18.

[60] *Hoover State Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 465-66. A State Department official of the time noted in his diary that while this message was in preparation ". . . the President sent back the message to the Secretary this afternoon, asking that it be redrafted, not as a recommendation from him to Congress, but as a recommendation to the President from the Secretary with a short covering and endorsing message from the President to Congress. He added, rather pathetically, that he thought in this way the chances of its passage would be greater. . . ." Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (1956), pp. 78-79.

[61] *New York Times* (Jan. 12, 1933); Current, *op. cit.* pp. 119-20.

[62] Current, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-23. *New York Times* (Jan. 17 and Jan. 18, 1932). Stimson made notes on a telephone conversation with Roosevelt: "The Governor began by asking me if I had seen his statement. . . . I told him that was one reason why I had called him up, to thank him for it. I told him it was a fine statement and, in my opinion, would do a great deal of good. The Governor replied yes, I think we have now got pretty good team work going." Memorandum of telephone conversation, January 17, 1933, Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

[63] Moley continued: "To say that I was sick at heart over what was happening would

In mid-January, Bullitt had left for a second round of visits to European capitals, this time equipped with a code in which he could report directly to FDR. Although his trip was supposed to be confidential and inconspicuous, newspaper stories soon began to describe his activities and depict him as Roosevelt's unofficial ambassador. Still keeping his advisers separate, Roosevelt assured Moley, when he inquired about Bullitt, that there was nothing to the stories.[64]

CONTROL IS SHIFTED

Roosevelt's endorsement of the administration's policies on arms shipments and on the Far East was only the beginning of a new involvement. His conversations with Stimson soon led to his again being drawn into discussions with the administration about how to handle the war debt negotiations and the World Economic Conference. Despite the fears, or perhaps due to the repeated warnings, of some members of his staff, Roosevelt did not commit himself to the plans of the outgoing administration. In effect, he moved in closely enough to gain control of this sector of policy and then froze the situation until after inauguration.

The Debts Again

After the December 15 debt payment deadline, the various debtor nations continued to press for discussion of adjustments. Great Britain, whose claim to consideration was strengthened by the fact that it had made the payment, took the lead in this matter, suggesting both debt talks and informal bilateral explorations preliminary to the World Eco-

be the epitome of understatement. I was also completely baffled. Was Roosevelt really ignorant of the implications of what he was doing? Or was he in process of achieving one of those 'compromises' between what he had led me to believe he thought and what he thought the Davises and Hulls of the party would like him to think? Or was this simply to prove to me—who, God knew, required no such proof—that he was dependent on no one kind of advice, on no adviser at all, in fact." Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

[64] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 135; Wehle, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-21. One would be inclined to take Wehle's account of Bullitt's missions more seriously if he did not also record that before Bullitt left on his second mission FDR "conceived the idea" that he might take a swing around Europe himself and even put Bullitt to work on an itinerary before reluctantly giving up the idea under pressure of other work. This was not the only time that Roosevelt amused himself—and kept zealots occupied—by concocting fantastic projects of this sort.

nomic Conference. Hoover was sympathetic but saw little point in trying to start these discussions. He could make no commitments himself, and neither Roosevelt nor Congress had approved his suggestion that a war debt commission or other special agency be established.

In his talk with Stimson on January 9, Roosevelt made the apparently offhand suggestion that if the British sent over a high-level negotiator, "someone like Stanley Baldwin," both the administration officially and Roosevelt unofficially could talk to him and try to work something out.[65] Stimson reported this to Hoover, but the President did not care for the idea. He thought the British debt only a segment of the total world economic problem, and he doubted that one negotiator was enough; it would require a panel of "the best and most expert brains" on both sides to work out a solution. He also did not want members of his administration negotiating with Great Britain with Roosevelt looking over their shoulders. "If the Governor wants an Englishman to come over and if *he* will do the negotiating we can facilitate it."[66]

Stimson telephoned Roosevelt with countersuggestions. He doubted that the British would be willing to send but one man; it was best to be prepared for a delegation. Since it was now so late that negotiators were unlikely to arrive before March, Roosevelt could plan to conduct the negotiations directly. However, advance preparations would be required, and ". . . the American plan must be Roosevelt's plan, not Hoover's plan." Why could not Roosevelt designate his future Secretaries of State and the Treasury to sit in on the preparations, since those officials would eventually be involved in the discussions anyway? Stimson also pressed the point that even if the debt negotiations were to be handled separately from the economic conference, Roosevelt would certainly want to have some idea of what the British would do at the conference if they got a debt adjustment. These suggestions Roosevelt accepted, or so Stimson thought. The conversation closed with an agreement that Roosevelt would stop in Washington on January 20, on his way to Warm Springs for a second sojourn, for another meeting with Hoover. At that time they would agree on what to tell the British.[67]

[65] Stimson, Memorandum of Conversation with Roosevelt, January 9, 1933. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

[66] Memorandum from Hoover to Stimson, Jan. 15, 1932. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

[67] Stimson, memorandum of telephone conversation with Roosevelt, Jan. 15, 1933. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21.

Again to the White House

On the afternoon of January 19, Roosevelt, Moley, and Tugwell arrived in Washington and checked in at the Mayflower. Much to Moley's irritation, Norman Davis also was in the party by Roosevelt's invitation. However, in their advance discussions, Roosevelt had agreed with Moley that there must be no commitment to debt talks before inauguration, and no linking of the debts and the economic conference preliminary discussions. Davis had not given up on the latter point, however, and he had a heated argument with Moley and Tugwell. Finally, Davis, who was not scheduled to participate in the meeting with Hoover, went to Roosevelt and maneuvered an invitation to accompany him and Moley to the White House.[68]

At the White House the next morning, Roosevelt, Moley, and Davis were greeted by Hoover, Stimson, and Mills. Although arguments were advanced for greater haste, Roosevelt stood firm on the point of no talks with the British before March.[69] The discussion then turned to the old question of the relation between the debt talks and the economic conference, with Hoover, Mills, and even Davis trying to convince Roosevelt that the two could not really be separated. After some time, according to Moley, Roosevelt stated firmly that they must be separated. Roosevelt and Hoover agreed on a brief press statement, the key portion of which read:

> The British Government has asked for a discussion of the debts. The incoming administration will be glad to receive their representatives early in March for this purpose. It is, of course, necessary to discuss at the same time the world economic problems in which the United States and Great Britain are mutually interested, and therefore that representatives should also be sent here to discuss ways and means for improving the world situation.[70]

[68] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

[69] This is Moley's story, *op. cit.*, p. 98. From Stimson's memorandum of his telephone conversation with Roosevelt on January 15, cited above, it would appear that this point was almost self-evident because the British could hardly arrive before March. The real question was who would handle the preparations for the talks between January and March; Moley has nothing to say about this. Unfortunately, Mr. Stimson neglected his Diary after mid-January.

[70] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 581-82.

Since Roosevelt had to take the train to the South early in the afternoon, it was agreed that Moley and Stimson would meet to prepare the official message to the British.

Another Misunderstanding

Just before he left the city, Roosevelt received a telephone call from Stimson, who read him the language of a draft note and asked him to approve it. Roosevelt asked Stimson to hold it up until Moley could see it. Moley and Tugwell then went to the State Department and found that Stimson had prepared a statement which, according to Moley, "despite the clear understanding that had been reached in the morning and embodied in President Hoover's statement, linked the debts and other economic problems." A stormy session ensued, in which Stimson insisted that Roosevelt had agreed, both by telephone from New York and again in the meeting with Hoover that morning, to combining the debt and other economic negotiations. Moley and Tugwell vehemently denied that he had meant to do so and contended that the language of the White House announcement bore them out. Eventually Stimson gave way, and they agreed on language that separated the two subjects to Moley's satisfaction. They parted amicably, but Moley remained convinced that Stimson had deliberately tried to misrepresent Roosevelt's views. Stimson commented wryly on the difficulty of being Secretary of State for two Presidents at once.[71]

In the next few days, rumors of the argument over the text of the note and of the competition between Moley and Davis for primacy in advising Roosevelt seeped into the papers. There were reports that Roosevelt was being advised by leading Democrats to dispense with Moley and let Davis, who was experienced in such matters and had the full confidence of both sides, handle the liaison with the State Department until inauguration. By now acutely sensitive on this point, Moley telephoned FDR and offered to step aside, but Roosevelt assured him that he was "through with Norman Davis" and that Moley was his "sole representative" for foreign economic matters.[72]

[71] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957), pp. 447-48.

[72] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 102, quotes Roosevelt's language as he recorded it in his diary for the day.

Roosevelt Takes Over

The effect of the second Hoover-Roosevelt conference was to give Roosevelt primacy on foreign economic policy matters. From then until March 4, Stimson handled indirect communications between Roosevelt and foreign nations. The Secretary of State worried a great deal about the propriety of what he was doing, and tried to observe the protocol that would protect Hoover's dignity, but he was not altogether successful, and there was a growing estrangement between the two in the last days of the administration.[73]

Conferring frequently with Moley, Stimson sent notes to Great Britain and other debtors, telling them that he was authorized to say that the new administration would be glad to receive their representatives in March. Stimson also arranged to have the British ambassador go to Warm Springs on January 29 for a long personal talk with Roosevelt. The meeting aroused comment as an oddity in diplomatic usage, but it seemingly amounted only to a general exchange of views.[74]

Hoover's final contribution to the subject was on February 13, when he devoted his last major speech as President to a long exposition of how the international economic situation was related to the depression in the United States. The way to recovery, he insisted, was to stabilize the currencies of Europe and get those countries back on the gold standard. He said, in obvious reference to the World Economic Conference: "If some sort of international financial action is necessary to enable central banks to cooperate for the purpose of stabilizing currencies, nations should have no hesitation in joining such an operation under proper safeguards. If some part of the debt payments to us could be set aside for temporary use for this purpose, we should not hesitate to do so."[75]

A few preliminary steps were taken during February to develop a Roosevelt position. Moley asked James Warburg, a New York banker who was on the fringes of the Roosevelt group, to work with him and the State Department experts. Bullitt also became involved after return-

[73] Stimson made a bad slip at a press conference on January 23, when he commented—although off the record—that he was really Roosevelt's acting Secretary of State. Current, *op. cit.*, p. 124; Stimson and Bundy, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

[74] Stimson, memorandum of telephone conversation with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jan. 27, 1933. Stimson Papers, Series F, Box 21. Also *New York Times* (Jan. 30, 1933).

[75] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 592.

ing in mid-February from his second trip to Europe. In order to reassure the progressive Republican—and vociferously isolationist—faction in Congress, Roosevelt asked Hiram Johnson and some of his colleagues of similar persuasion to suggest men who might be drawn into the conference preparations. By this time, however, inauguration was so imminent and other matters were so pressing that little was accomplished. As of inauguration day, the British were still trying to find out when the talks could begin.

As February wore on, Stimson became increasingly concerned because Roosevelt had not announced his successor, since he thought it imperative that there be ample time for discussions between himself and the new Secretary. Taking note of apparently well-founded rumors, he telephoned Roosevelt on February 20 to complain that everyone but himself seemed to know that Senator Cordell Hull of Tennessee had the job. Roosevelt confirmed that this was true. But only after Hull's appointment was officially announced a day or two later did Stimson get in touch with him. From February 25 to March 8, Stimson and Hull had long, friendly talks about the problems of the State Department.[76]

[76] Stimson and Bundy, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

CHAPTER 23

THE LAST OF THE LAME DUCKS

After election it was obvious that the second session of the Seventy-Second Congress, due to convene on December 5, was going to be the last short, or "lame duck," session in history. Senator George Norris' reform amendment, which the Republican leadership had kept bottled up for a decade, had cleared Congress earlier in 1932 and was rapidly being approved by state legislatures.[1] After 1933, the terms of senators and representatives would begin, and congressional sessions would open, early in January. Inauguration day for President and Vice President was moved up from March 4 to January 20.[2] But these reforms were for the future. Meanwhile, the country was to have a final demonstration of the futility of the old arrangements.[3]

Even counting its 158 lame ducks, the old Congress was oriented more

[1] The Twentieth Amendment was officially ratified in February 1933, and became effective in October 1933.

[2] Norris' motivation, and the principal argument advanced for the change, was to make Congress more immediately responsive to the voters by eliminating the "lame duck" sessions, in which, it was said, legislators already defeated at the polls often behaved irresponsibly. Shortening the period between the election and inauguration of the President was considered a useful by-product. Little consideration seems to have been given to the effect of the new sequence of congressional and presidential terms on legislative-executive relations. George W. Norris, *Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris* (1945); Paul H. Giddens, "Constitutional Amendments Proposed in the Seventy-Second Congress," *United States Law Review*, Vol. 68 (January 1934), pp. 20-22; Carl B. Swisher, *American Constitutional Development* (1943), pp. 722-33.

[3] A thorough and generally critical resumé of the session is E. Pendleton Herring, "Second Session of the Seventy-Second Congress," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 27 (June 1933), pp. 404-22.

to Roosevelt's leadership than to Hoover's. The House, presided over by Speaker and Vice President-elect John N. Garner, already had 219 Democrats to 209 Republicans (6 vacancies, 1 Farmer-Labor) as a result of the 1930 elections. The Senate was still organized by the Republicans, with 48 members to the Democrats' 47 (1 Farmer-Labor). However, both houses contained many Western, progressive, and usually isolationist Republicans who had split with Hoover and supported Roosevelt in November.

ROOSEVELT SUGGESTS

Roosevelt looked forward to the session with mixed feelings about the role he should play. He had commitments, and the country urgently needed legislation in many fields. A special session after March 4 was obviously going to be necessary, but if the lame duck session could be made productive enough, he might be able to delay calling the special session for a few weeks after inauguration, while he got the new administration organized. In recognition of his strategic position, many legislators and others urged him to step in and take immediate command of the legislative situation.[4]

The difficulty was that Roosevelt was not ready for a general legislative effort. In some fields, he was not sure what he wanted and was not familiar with the bills already proposed. He also was uncertain about his relations with the senators and representatives—which ones would be likely to follow his leadership and which ones might not, and what the limits of legislative tolerance were. This was particularly important since he could not be on the Washington scene to look after his interests. Many of the lame ducks were certain to be uncooperative, and there was also the possibility that if Congress did pass legislation Roosevelt wanted, Hoover would veto it. There was much to be said for waiting for the new Congress and its solid Democratic majority.[5]

Nevertheless, senators and representatives were already beating a path

[4] Some of the arguments advanced for Roosevelt's asserting legislative leadership prior to his inauguration were based on dubious historical precedent. There seems to have been an impression that Wilson had done so at the comparable moment. *E.g.*, see article by Arthur Krock in the *New York Times* (Dec. 18, 1932). Although Wilson did have useful conversations with legislators on one or two specific subjects, he began late and was far more diffident toward Congress, prior to inauguration, than Roosevelt was to be.

[5] Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), pp. 45-47, analyzes Roosevelt's dilemma in some detail.

to FDR's door, and he could not very well refuse to see them. When he did see them, he could not discuss what was to be done after March 4 without mentioning the intervening period. In his conversations with Democratic leaders in Washington after his November 22 conference with Hoover, and in subsequent discussions with legislators at Warm Springs, Roosevelt pursued a cautious course. His goal was to get agreement among the Democratic and progressive Republican leaders, and among the principal interest groups, on a limited number of legislative measures that were urgent, widely agreed on, and likely not to meet a Hoover veto if passed before inauguration day.[6] A corollary of this policy was to avoid antagonizing congressmen unnecessarily—for example, by trying to persuade them to accept Hoover's unpopular policy on the war debts!

Between November 24 and December 6, the newspapers reported the presence in Warm Springs of such legislators as Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas, one of Garner's principal lieutenants in the House; Representative Carl Vinson of Georgia; Senate Democratic leader Joseph Robinson of Arkansas; Democratic Senators James Byrnes of South Carolina, Claude Swanson of Virginia, and Burton K. Wheeler of Montana; and Progressive Republican Senator Bronson Cutting of New Mexico. Also in evidence were representatives of such interest groups as the Farm Bureau and the National Grange; agricultural experts like Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Henry A. Wallace of Iowa; and many others.

There was no formal announcement of a program as such, but the news from Warm Springs and the comments of legislators arriving in Washington indicated several goals widely agreed on. They were:

First, a balanced budget.

Second, a resolution repealing the Eighteenth (prohibition) Amendment, thus executing a major plank in the Democratic platform.

Third, pending repeal, a bill authorizing beer; this could be justified both for its own sake and as a revenue measure, since there would be a federal tax on beer.

[6] "He could ask the co-operation of the Congressional leaders of his own party and of the Republican Progressives who had supported him in the election in getting that legislation enacted. But so far as possible he used his influence quietly. He could not afford to make enemies prematurely among men whose aid he would need later when he could more effectively demand it. Above all, he could not afford to risk the impairment of his prestige in the eyes of the country. The country looked to him to shatter the terrifying wall of governmental inaction, indecision, and futility. Only faith or hope that he could do that held the nation together." *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Fourth, a bill expediting bankruptcy proceedings.

Fifth, a bill providing mortgage relief for farmers.

Sixth, a bill to raise farm incomes, probably through the so-called "domestic allotment plan," which called for reduction of farm production in exchange for bounties financed by a processing tax. This was complicated, but most of the major agricultural interests seemed to be agreeing on it.

HOOVER PROPOSES

The short session of Congress convened on December 5. Because there were 1,200 "hunger marchers" in Washington, police armed with tear gas and riot guns surrounded the Capitol as a precautionary measure.

On the opening day, Speaker Garner struck a quick parliamentary blow for liberty and narrowly missed jamming a resolution repealing the Eighteenth Amendment through the House. The motion received only six votes less than the necessary two thirds. This did not necessarily end the matter, as it was predicted that a beer bill and a Senate resolution for repeal would come up later in the session.

The following day, in his State of the Union message, President Hoover began unfolding a program he thought appropriate to the needs of the occasion.[7] On the surface, much of it coincided with the Democratic objectives being enunciated in Warm Springs and on Capitol Hill. Furthermore, Speaker Garner and Senate Democratic leader Robinson, when given a preview, had privately assured Hoover of support for some of the key items.

The Hoover Program

Hoover's primary effort, which he thought would do more than any other thing to speed recovery, was to balance the federal budget.[8] The prospects were for a deficit in the current (1933) fiscal year of at least a billion dollars.[9] Hoover proposed to bring the 1934 budget toward

[7] William Starr Myers (ed.), *The State Papers and Other Public Writings of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 2 (1934), pp. 494-505. Cited hereafter as *Hoover State Papers.*

[8] For Hoover's fiscal theories, see Lewis H. Kimmel, *Federal Budget and Fiscal Policies, 1789-1958* (1959), pp. 143-53.

[9] When the figures were all in, the 1933 deficit came to over $2.5 billion, but this was not foreseen at the time.

balance by reducing expenditures from $4.8 billion to $4.2 billion. The savings were to be achieved by rigid economies in general operations of government, deferring all but the most essential capital expenditures, and reducing civil service salaries and veterans benefits.[10]

Further economies, unspecified in amount, Hoover planned to achieve by administrative reorganization. A bill passed in the previous session had given the President authority to transfer functions and reorganize and consolidate agencies by executive order, subject to veto by a majority vote in either house of Congress within sixty days. On December 9, Hoover presented a plan for reorganizations throughout the government.[11]

But the budget could not be balanced by expenditure economies alone. Hoover proposed to pick up an extra half-billion dollars in revenue by continuing the federal tax on gasoline, which was due to expire June 30, and by a manufacturer's sales tax of 2½ per cent on all products except food and inexpensive clothing. Garner apparently had specifically agreed with Hoover to support the sales tax.[12]

The second major area to which Hoover invited the attention of Congress was the nation's financial institutions. The main need was for banking reform. This also seemed to be a priority area for the Democrats, and was agreed to by Garner and Robinson. Hoover did not spell out detailed proposals but trusted the initiative to Senator Carter Glass of Virginia, the conservative Democratic patriarch of financial matters, who had a bill ready.[13] Hoover also recommended emergency legislation dealing with bankruptcy procedures and with the farm mortgage problem.

The third major area mentioned by Hoover was international economic cooperation. He called attention to the World Disarmament Con-

[10] The details were spelled out in Hoover's budget message of December 7. *Hoover State Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 505-31.

[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 532-41. In addition to many minor reorganizations and consolidations, the proposals included such major—and politically explosive—reorganizations as transfer of Army civil works functions to the Department of Interior, transfer of the Land Office to the Department of Agriculture, and transfer of many of the functions of the General Accounting Office to the Bureau of the Budget.

[12] This Hoover interpreted as evidence that ". . . being now free from the politics of an election, he became again the statesman he really was at heart." (Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 3, 1952, p. 192.) Hoover also claims that the Democratic leaders secured Roosevelt's approval of this agreement, citing a passage in Garner's biography to prove his point. (Bascom N. Timmons, *Garner of Texas,* 1948.) This claim, however, is unsupported by the contemporary newspaper accounts or the memoirs of the Rooseveltians.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 193; William Starr Myers and Walter H. Newton, *The Hoover Administration* (1936), pp. 315-17.

ference, in which the United States had been participating for some time. Success in this field would reduce tax burdens and "open new vistas of economic expansion for the world."[14] He also reported on the preparations for the World Economic Conference, which he expected to contribute greatly to the restoration of international trade and investment. Finally, he reported officially to Congress the European requests for adjustment of the war debts and his own position that the December payments must be made. Obviously waiting to see what the debtors would do about these payments, he promised Congress a further report and specific recommendations at a later time.

Budget balancing, banking reform, and international economic cooperation formed the heart of Hoover's program, but in addition, "just to keep the flag flying," as he notes in his *Memoirs,* he recommended ratification of the St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty, retirement of marginal agricultural lands, creation of a mortgage discount system, extension of the powers of the R.F.C. and Home Loan Banks, reform of procedures in criminal cases, protection of the western ranges, and aid to child health.[15]

"We are but transitory officials . . ."

President Hoover's messages were not aimed exclusively at the Congress. On December 10, at a Gridiron Club dinner in Washington, he spoke with wry humor to the correspondents about his relations with the press—which had been strained of late—and of the recent election. He also seized the occasion to speak seriously of his concern for the future. Characteristically, he put conservative philosophy into engineering language:

> The life stream of this Nation is the generations of millions of human particles acting under impulses of advancing ideas and national ideals gathered from a thousand springs. These springs and rills have gathered into great streams which have nurtured and fertilized this great land over these centuries. Its dikes against dangerous floods are cemented with the blood of our fathers. Our children will strengthen these dikes, will create new channels, and the land will grow greater and richer with their lives.
>
> We are but transitory officials in Government whose duty is to keep these channels clear and to strengthen and extend their dikes. What counts

[14] *Hoover State Papers,* Vol. 2, p. 502.
[15] Hoover, *Memoirs,* Vol. 3, p. 194.

> toward the honor of public officials is that they sustain the national ideals upon which are patterned the design of these channels of progress and the construction of these dikes of safety. What is said in this or in that political campaign counts no more than the sound of the cheerful ripples or the angry whirls of the stream. What matters is—that God help the man or the group who breaks down these dikes, who diverts these channels to selfish ends. These waters will drown him or them in a tragedy that will spread over a thousand years.[16]

Having delivered this warning, Mr. Hoover went on to speak of the future of the Republicans as an opposition party and of the importance of courage, devotion to principle, and responsibility in both the majority and the opposition. "We must maintain that cooperation at home which while it maintains party responsibility yet rises above partisanship. The new administration has my good wishes; it has the good wishes of every American, for in its success lies the welfare of our country."[17]

CONGRESS DISPOSES

The events of the next few weeks strained Hoover's good will to the breaking point. First came his unfruitful exchange of correspondence with Roosevelt about appointing the delegation for the international economic conference. About the time the tension over this subject began to ease, due to the Roosevelt-Stimson exchanges, it became quite clear that cooperation from Congress was not going to materialize. In fact, the legislative session gave little comfort to either the President or the President-elect, despite what appeared at the beginning to be a considerable area of agreement about what should be done.

The Tax Muddle

Hoover's first disappointment was over the manufacturer's sales tax with which he proposed to balance the budget. On December 26, Garner kept his promise to Hoover and made a public statement in support of the measure. When this news reached Albany, Roosevelt told reporters that he was "horrified."[18] Garner and Robinson had assured Hoover of their support without clearing with the President-elect, apparently as-

[16] *Hoover State Papers,* Vol. 2, p. 543.
[17] *Ibid.,* p. 544.
[18] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 27, Dec. 28, 1932).

suming that this fell within their general understanding that the budget ought to be balanced.[19]

This confusion over the Democratic line on taxes stimulated Roosevelt to a more open and deliberate show of legislative leadership than he had probably intended. He invited Garner, Robinson, and several other leading congressional Democrats to a conference in New York on January 5, for the avowed purpose of clarifying party policy. At the conference, the legislative leaders agreed to abandon support of the sales tax. The Democrats, it was announced, would balance the budget by strict economy in appropriations, by legalizing and then taxing beer, and by a step-up in income tax rates.[20]

The proposal to raise the income tax, however, raised a new commotion in Congress. Some of the Democratic legislative leaders immediately backed away from it. Roosevelt dissociated himself by saying that it had been their idea, not his. The result was ill-feeling all around, and no credit to Roosevelt's leadership.[21] With the President-elect opposed to the sales tax and unwilling to take the lead in advocating the income tax increase, the legislators gave up altogether. Despite a renewed plea from Hoover on January 17, no tax legislation was passed.[22]

Repeal but No Beer

The Democrats were fully committed to repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment as soon as possible. After Garner's repeal resolution failed in the House on the opening day of the session, the Senate Judiciary Committee began preparing a repeal resolution with reservations intended to reassure moderate "drys." This proposal was discussed at Roosevelt's January 5 conference with the legislative leaders. The President-elect

[19] This is a charitable explanation of the failure of Garner and Robinson to clear in advance with Roosevelt. Roosevelt's aides thought the legislative leaders were trying to commit the Democrats to a conservative tax policy before Roosevelt had an opportunity to make his influence felt.

[20] *New York Times* (Jan. 6, 1933).

[21] *Ibid.* (Jan. 7, 8, 9, 1933); *New York Herald Tribune* (Jan. 8, 1933); "The press reaction in all parts of the country to the incident was perceptibly damaging to Mr. Roosevelt's prestige." Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[22] Hoover's second message on taxation and economy is in *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 576-81. In his *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, pp. 192-93, Hoover is bitter at Roosevelt's negativism on tax matters. Assuming that the budget must be balanced, Hoover was willing to shoulder the responsibility for advocating necessary taxation and spare Roosevelt that unpleasant duty. But Roosevelt did not seem to appreciate what Hoover wanted to do for him and would not give even a little help!

reminded them: "It doesn't conform to the platform," and the measure was dropped.[23]

The House later passed a bill authorizing 3.2 per cent beer, but the measure never reached the Senate floor. Various reasons were given: quibbling in the committee over whether permissible non-intoxicating beer should be 3.2 per cent or 3.05 per cent, pressure from liquor interests unwilling to settle for anything less than full repeal, and predictions that Hoover was certain to veto the bill anyway.[24]

Late in the session, the Democratic leadership pulled itself together for another try at passage of an acceptable repeal resolution. After much whip-cracking on the Democratic side and a few strategic trades with erstwhile dry Republicans, a "clean" resolution conforming to the platform was put through the Senate on February 16 and the House on February 20. Requiring no presidential signature, it went directly to the state legislatures and was ratified within the year.

Reorganization

As might have been expected, Democratic congressmen lined up against Hoover's elaborate administrative reorganization plan. Some claimed that Hoover had gone too far; others that he had not gone far enough; and still others that this was a matter that should be left to the new President. Hoover made a special appeal in a press statement on January 3,[25] but it was no use. On January 19, the necessary majority vote was mustered in the House, and the Hoover plans were disapproved.

Roosevelt remained silent while this was going on, obviously having no desire to inherit Hoover's handiwork. However, he was fully aware of the value of the authority for the President to propose reorganizations. He had Lewis Douglas, Swagar Sherley, and others working on a proposal to give the President even greater authority to reorganize agencies and achieve economies. Late in the session a rider attached to an appropriation bill authorized the President, for a period of two years, to reorganize or "to abolish the whole or any part of any executive agency and/or the functions thereof." The only restriction was that he could not abolish any of the ten major departments. This was much greater discretion than that previously available, which had not authorized the abolition of func-

[23] Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[24] *Ibid.*; Herring, *op. cit.*, p. 420.
[25] *Hoover State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 562.

tions and mainly permitted the President to "play solitaire with the bureaus and commissions." Executive orders under the new plan could be blocked only by regular legislation, rather than the previous resolution of either house.[26]

Banking Legislation

In his State of the Union message, Hoover strongly recommended passage of general legislation to strengthen the national banking system. Since the Democratic leaders also seemed to agree that this was needed, and Senator Carter Glass had a bill that was broadly acceptable to Hoover, the prospects for early action were excellent. However, when the Glass bill came up in the Senate on January 10, Huey Long led a noisy attack on it, ostensibly because it did not sufficiently control the evils of branch banking. Despite Hoover's desire to see the bill passed, the Senate Republican leadership headed by "Big Jim" Watson of Indiana, a lame duck himself, encouraged Long's obstructionism.[27] Roosevelt remained silent, while both Long and Glass sought to give the impression that the President-elect was on their side. After a debate of several days, an attempt at cloture failed, but the filibusterers relented and the bill passed the Senate on January 25.[28] Hoover renewed his appeals late in the session, but the bill never reached the House floor.

In one related field, Hoover got substantially what he asked for. On January 11, he revived several previous recommendations for legislation to facilitate individual and corporate bankruptcy proceedings. This fell within the general area of agreement among the Democratic leaders. A bill passed the House on January 30, and, after Hoover appealed again, it was passed by the Senate on February 27. The final version was somewhat watered-down from what Hoover wanted, but the bankruptcy bill went on the record as the sole major recommendation by the President adopted during the session.[29]

[26] Herring, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-15; Lewis Meriam and Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *Reorganization of the National Government* (1939), pp. 199-200. Since such legislation would be subject to veto, a two-thirds vote in both houses, rather than the former simple majority in one house, would be required to block the plans of a President who insisted on having his way.

[27] Watson later explained that he had tried to make certain there would have to be a special session immediately after inauguration, so that the confusion in the Democratic ranks would be fully revealed. James E. Watson, *As I Knew Them* (1936) pp. 305-06.

[28] Herring, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

Farm Legislation

After the tax fiasco, about the only subject on which Roosevelt and his associates seriously tried to exercise the legislative initiative was agriculture. Hoover had no plans, and such Roosevelt advisers as Tugwell, Henry Wallace, and Morgenthau considered it urgent to have a new farm program before the spring planting season. Roosevelt had preliminary conferences with farm leaders at Warm Springs in November. Tugwell and Morgenthau were assigned to follow up on the subject, secure agreement among the various farm organizations, and push something through if possible. At first, there seemed to be agreement on the so-called domestic allotment plan. However, the New Dealers got their first bitter experience at lobbying. The bill passed the House badly mutilated by special commodity interests, and "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina, Chairman of the Senate agriculture committee, proved to be completely immune either to reason or Rooseveltian charm. The result was that all the old quarrels among agricultural interests were perpetuated, and no bill was passed. There were suspicions that Hoover would have vetoed it anyway.[30]

Appropriations

Prodded by frequent reminders from Hoover, Congress fulfilled about as well as could have been expected its early resolutions about economy in appropriations. Hoover's budget was for approximately $4.2 billion. At the end of the session, the bills provided for a total of about $160 million in excess of that figure. The difference was due primarily to the refusal of Congress to accept Hoover's recommendations for cuts in veterans benefits.

Fighting to the end for the principle of the balanced budget, Hoover killed by pocket veto the appropriation bill that contained the funds for the Veterans Administration. This seemed at the time a futile gesture, because Congress had not enacted any new taxes, and it was now obvious that revenue under existing laws would fall far short of previous estimates. Regardless of the veterans benefits, a deficit of well over $1 billion (in a $4 billion budget) was in prospect. In the end, however, the

[30] Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52; Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), p. 266.

veto contributed to Hoover's purpose by keeping the subject alive for the post-inaugural special session and providing Roosevelt an opportunity to launch an economy drive of his own.

Confirmations

As might have been expected, Congress refused, just as it had refused on the eve of previous party turnovers, to confirm the outgoing President's appointments. The issue was forced early in the session, on December 14, when the Senate refused by a roll-call vote of 37 to 44 to go into executive session to consider nominations.[31] After that, nominations were confirmed only in a few special cases. Over 2,000 positions, ranging from seats on important boards and commissions at Washington to local postmasters, customs collectors, and internal revenue collectors, were vacant (or became vacant due to expiration of recess appointments) at the end of the session.

Investigations

Failing to agree on new measures of wide significance, congressional committees probed into the past and sought ideas for the future. The Senate Banking and Currency Committee dug into securities marketing practices, the manipulations of Samuel Insull and his utilities holding companies, and other stupidities and iniquities of the financial community. The Senate Finance Committee sought wisdom by calling before it a long list of the great figures of American business and economics. Few could offer much hope. Most of them counseled reliance on strict governmental economy and new taxes to balance the budget. Only a few heretics demanded national planning and deficit spending.[32] "By the time these Senate committees had finished their examination of business magnates, both honest and shady, it was clear to the public that human fallibility and ignorance were not confined to the halls of the legislature."[33]

[31] Herring, *op. cit.*, p. 410.
[32] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957), pp. 457-58; Kimmel, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
[33] Herring, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

Frustrations

All in all, it was a difficult session for everyone. Hoover received two serious rebuffs in addition to those already mentioned. A bill providing for Philippine independence in ten years, opposed by the Filipinos and apparently motivated mainly by a desire to get the Filipinos outside the American tariff wall, was passed over his veto. More immediately damaging, in Hoover's view, was the action of the House in forcing disclosure of the transactions of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a government agency that had been giving emergency loans to banks and other corporate enterprises. Publicity of the fact that a bank had received a loan only drew attention to its difficulties and sometimes touched off a run on deposits that canceled the effect of the loan and forced the bank to close anyway.

Some of the progressive Republican senators launched a drive for an expanded program of federally financed relief for the unemployed, but they received no encouragement from Hoover, Roosevelt, or the legislative leaders of either party, and nothing resulted.

The session added little to the luster of the President-elect. His abortive intervention on tax legislation cost him considerable prestige with the public and soured his relations with the Democratic legislative leaders for a time. The failure of the farm bill demonstrated the dangers of amateur lobbying and the determination of some of the well-entrenched senators not to be pushed around by this upstart in New York. By the middle of the session, Roosevelt was cautious and seemed to give up hope of significant legislative accomplishment until after inauguration. Toward the end of the session the situation changed somewhat, as the mounting national crisis increased the receptivity of Congress to suggestions from the President-elect and moved it to action on several matters. The prohibition repeal resolution was passed, the bankruptcy legislation went through, and Roosevelt's finesse on executive authority to achieve reorganization and economy paid off. But Roosevelt remained shy of Congress until the very end. "While the politicians talked the forces leading to the financial crisis gathered threateningly," noted Herring. "If proof of this faulty arrangement were needed, this session would provide conclusive evidence as to the danger and futility of retaining in office those already repudiated by the people at the polls."[34]

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 421.

CHAPTER 24

PREPARATIONS WITHOUT COMMITMENTS

In addition to his dealings with Hoover and Congress, Roosevelt worked on preparations that were his own particular responsibility. He had to clean up his governor's office, decide on his principal appointments, and develop plans for dealing with the most pressing policy issues after inauguration day. He also needed time to rest and to arrange his personal affairs for the move to Washington, although Mrs. Roosevelt seems to have relieved him of most of the latter burden.[1]

Compared to Presidents-elect before him, Roosevelt found little uninterrupted time for vacation before inauguration. Fortunately, he was in excellent physical condition. He was well suited temperamentally to the life he was assuming, rarely tiring of meeting new people and discussing new problems. He also enjoyed frequent changes of location and even the act of traveling itself. Since there were several bases from which he could operate with reasonable facility, FDR and his entourage, like a medieval king and his court, were often on the move.

While he was still governor, Roosevelt often left Albany, usually on week ends, to spend a day or two at his home in Hyde Park or at his house in New York City. After January 2, he divided his time between Hyde Park and the town house when in the New York area. Before inauguration he also made two trips to the South, both times stopping in Washington for meetings with Hoover. A ten-day cruise off the Florida

[1] Mrs. Roosevelt was, of course, accustomed to handling large staffs of servants and complicated domestic arrangements. She was also no stranger to the White House. Late in January, she paid a visit to Mrs. Hoover and was given the usual tour and introduction to the staff.

coast on the yacht *Nourmahal,* owned by his friend Vincent Astor, was his only extended vacation in the usual sense. After that he returned to New York to complete his preparations. Excepting the period on the boat, there were several conferences almost every day with members of his staff, advisers, and visitors. Roosevelt headquarters was wherever Roosevelt happened to be.[2]

NO RASPUTINS

After election, the shift from campaigning to preparing for the White House changed Roosevelt's staff requirements and brought informal adjustments in the positions of the members of his inner circle. Sam Rosenman concentrated on New York state business and withdrew into the background after December. Louis Howe, always in precarious health, was exhausted from the campaign and relatively quiet for several weeks. Seeing politics primarily in terms of personalities, strategic alliances, and financial support, Howe juggled cabinet slates and lists of embassies and waited for FDR to be ready to make decisions about the major appointments. He also made a trip to Washington to talk to President Hoover's secretaries and look over the White House offices. Jim Farley stood by for consideration of lesser presidential appointments and patronage generally. The problems of dealing with Hoover and Congress on specific policy matters brought to the top the "issues men," Moley and the Brain Trust.

While it must have been obvious to Roosevelt during the campaign that if he won he would continue to need Moley, or someone like him,

[2] The following is a rough account of Roosevelt's whereabouts from election to inauguration:

November 8 (Election Day)	
November 9-21	Albany and Hyde Park
November 22-23	Washington, D.C. (first Hoover meeting)
November 24-December 6	Warm Springs, Ga.
December 8-January 2	Albany and Hyde Park (ends as governor)
January 3-18	New York City and Hyde Park
January 19-20	Washington, D.C. (second Hoover meeting)
January 21	Muscle Shoals and Montgomery, Ala.
January 22-February 3	Warm Springs, Ga.
February 4-14	Ocean Cruise
February 15-16	Miami, Fla. (assassination attempt)
February 17	Washington, D.C.
February 18-March 1	New York City and Hyde Park
March 2-3	Washington, D.C.
March 4 (Inauguration Day)	

he said nothing to Moley before or immediately after election. It was not until late November, at Warm Springs after the first meeting with Hoover, that Roosevelt told Moley what he had in mind. He wanted him to continue as a confidential aide until inauguration. After that, Moley would become Assistant Secretary of State, but since that post had no specific statutory duties, he could continue to function primarily as a presidential assistant. Moley expressed reluctance to enter the administration, but Roosevelt emphasized his great need for the sort of help no one else could provide, especially during the weeks immediately ahead.[3] Finally, without promising to stay after inauguration day, Moley agreed to continue helping FDR for the time being. He set off for Washington and New York to hold more conferences and set the now scattered "Brain Trusters" and others to work on legislation.

Moley was apparently not the only man with reservations about Moley's future. On the train to Washington he encountered Congressman Sam Rayburn. After they had chatted of various matters, Rayburn suddenly leaned over and whispered: "I hope we don't have any goddam Rasputin in this administration!"[4] As it turned out, there were many aspirants but no successful candidates for the role.

Free Competition

Moley proceeded to employ the original Brain Trust technique and personnel. He, Tugwell, and Berle each took assignments to consult appropriate people and either prepare, or have others prepare, specific plans in certain fields. Tugwell, as already noted, worked with Morgenthau, Wallace, and farm expert M. L. Wilson on agricultural price legislation. Berle consulted Professor H. Parker Willis, who had helped to draft the original Federal Reserve Act in the Wilson period, about farm mortgage legislation. Berle also was assigned to work with William Woodin of American Car and Foundry Company, one of the original Roosevelt financial supporters, and with Joseph Eastman, a member of

[3] "I'm still Governor of New York and I face a terrible couple of weeks before January 1st finishing up that job. Meanwhile the debts thing may crop up again, and I've got to get some legislation from this Congress.

"I have no Cabinet yet. I can't call in many people for advice and help without inviting speculation about whether I'm going to appoint them. That will embarrass them and me. You know my intellectual commitments. You know most of the people that we've got to put to work. I'd counted on you to keep in touch with the State Department on debts for me, and to get the ball on legislation rolling!" Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), p. 81.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

the Interstate Commerce Commission, on a plan to straighten out the financial difficulties of the railroads. Moley himself reached back to the Wilson era to find Samuel Untermyer, counsel to the Pujo Committee of 1912 and a perennial crusader against Wall Street, and put him to work on a plan to regulate securities marketing. These activities got started in early December. "All the excitement, the man-killing pressure of the pre-election days began again," said Moley. "There were telephonings, temperaments, conferences, crises. The big push was on."[5]

While most of this policy staff work cleared through Moley, there were from the beginning several others with direct commissions from the President-elect. Lewis Douglas, for example, and Swagar Sherley, a Washington lawyer and former congressman from Kentucky, who had been a mainstay of the House Appropriations Committee in the Wilson days, worked on the economy and budget-balancing problem. From Washington they reported to FDR on Hoover's budget, what Congress was doing to it, and where there were possibilities of further cuts. They also worked on a plan to get Roosevelt statutory authority to achieve economy through administrative reorganization or drastic slashing of activities and expenses.

As December and January passed, the preparatory process became increasingly disorderly. Part of the problem was administrative. There was so much work to do, and so many people were involved in it, that neither Moley nor anyone else could keep track of everything. Some jobs that should have been done were overlooked; in other cases, Roosevelt's helpers duplicated each others' efforts, or worked at cross purposes. Roosevelt's personality and administrative habits complicated matters. No one knew all the people he was seeing or what assignments he was giving them. He was so pleasant to all his visitors and seemed so receptive to their ideas that new people were constantly turning up who had, or thought they had, authority from Roosevelt to "see what could be done," or to "work up something," on this or that subject.

Far more was at stake than administrative tidiness. Roosevelt's associates—not to mention the hundreds of politicians, businessmen, professors, lobbyists, reformers, and just plain cranks who saw him, called him on the telephone, wrote letters to him, planted ideas with his friends, or issued public pronouncements intended to catch his eye—believed they were in a battle to influence Roosevelt's mind and control the future.[6]

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[6] Moley, for example, speaks of being in this period ". . . face to face with those

And in some respects they were. Schlesinger speaks of the "persistent myth" that the New Deal measures after inauguration came as a surprise; he emphasizes the many respects in which Roosevelt's intentions were clear at the end of the campaign.[7] Granting this, it is also certain that Roosevelt was committed to some measures that were at least potentially inconsistent with each other, and that on several questions of priority and emphasis he seemed—indeed, was—quite uncertain.

Some Crucial Questions

International economic policy was a good example of his uncertainty. Roosevelt gave early appearance of being wedded to the nationalist approach advocated by Tugwell and Moley; in this view, the domestic economy merited first priority, and until conditions improved at home, there was more to be lost than to be gained in debt talks, trade agreements, currency stabilization, and other devices. Roosevelt refused, apparently more for political than for economic reasons, to embrace the proposals Hoover made to him. However, the Brain Trusters watched with anxiety his flirtation with the old order as personified by Stimson. "Protecting" Roosevelt was harder because the dangerous influences were not all outside the Democratic party. In addition to such obvious renegades as Norman Davis, well-intentioned but hopelessly outmoded Democratic free traders like Senator Cordell Hull of Tennessee also complicated the lives of the Brain Trusters.

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forces—external and internal—that threatened to impair the fundamental integrity of the New Deal even before it got under way. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 106.) Tugwell, in an illuminating article tracing the apparent evolution of Roosevelt's thought and the successive shifts in policy emphasis, comments with some bitterness:

"If there was a decisive change when the nomination was won and a flood of new influences and pressures swept in upon the candidate, this was even more true after the election. The first flood consisted largely of Democrats who either pretended they had been for him all along or who frankly said that hatchets ought to be buried. . . . The second flood, however, included the real power and might of finance and industry. Most of them supported Mr. Hoover to the last. . . . But once the election was over, their desire to become the confidential advisers of the new President-elect led to a certain unseemly gate crashing and even to certain humilities assumed for the moment. They were willing to take charge of the education now; and they appeared to feel not only that most of it remained to be done but even that Mr. Roosevelt was still a kind of *tabula rasa* on which they might write at will. And the strange fact is that it was not altogether too late for their purposes." Rexford G. Tugwell, "The Preparation of a President," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (June 1948), pp. 146-47.

[7] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957), pp. 452-53, 538.

A second major area of uncertainty was the federal budget. Tugwell comments:

> He [Roosevelt] had no settled financial plan . . . having promised both governmental economies, a balanced budget, a sound dollar, and so on; and having also promised recovery through the restoration of purchasing power, which, if it meant anything, meant spending. He was reconciling these in his own mind by minimizing the funds needed for relief and public works and by hoping for economies by cutting down other government activities. He was amply warned by the Brain Trust that he was exaggerating both.[8]

If the requirements for saving and for spending could not be reconciled, which would give way? The senior Democrats in Congress, patriarchs like Baruch, Roosevelt's budget adviser Lewis Douglas, and "responsible" men of all kinds called for stringent measures to balance the budget and thereby restore business confidence. On the other hand, most of the younger Democrats, progressive Republicans, and people whose humanitarianism had overcome their economic educations demanded that the government act; deficits, however regrettable, were better than letting people starve. Even the Brain Trusters were not too unorthodox in this respect. While they advocated many new programs, they would have increased taxes to keep the deficit within reasonable limits.

Closely related to the budget was the currency question. With prices collapsed and the country in a severe deflation, there were demands from many sources, particularly from producers of commodities, that the government do something to raise prices and lighten the burden of debt contracted when prices were higher and money was easier. To this end, various schemes for manipulating or inflating the currency were proposed. Conservatives, however, warned against "tampering with the currency" or deviating from the gold standard (*i.e.,* changing the fixed price at which gold and currency could be exchanged). During the campaign, Roosevelt had scoffed at Hoover's "visions of rubber dollars" and reiterated his support of the Democratic platform promise of "a sound currency to be preserved at all hazards." However, he had not specifically promised adherence to the existing gold standard. After the November election the pressures on both sides became intense. Roosevelt talked to experts ranging from orthodox economists and bankers to money cranks of the most extreme kind. Western congressmen revived talk of free coinage of silver. Some economists advocated

[8] Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), pp. 261-62.

going off gold as a basis for currency; another group issued a public statement urging that the gold standard be "unflinchingly maintained." Morgenthau brought to Roosevelt a Cornell University professor named George W. Warren, who had a plan for a "commodity dollar" that would relate gold and commodity prices. Conservatives warned against any such heresy.

President Hoover, obsessed by fear of runaway inflation, agonized over the rumors that Roosevelt planned to abandon gold. He blamed the rapidly deteriorating banking situation on public doubt about Roosevelt's intentions to maintain a sound currency. Roosevelt himself apparently was rapidly becoming convinced that some sort of inflation was necessary, but he was uncertain about the specific method or what it would mean for the gold standard. He was, of course, unable to discuss the problem or his intentions in public. The new administration's currency policy remained a subject of much speculation and, as inauguration day approached, of increasing urgency.[9]

While everyone from Bernard Baruch to Huey Long offered advice and jostled for access, Roosevelt remained noncommittal. Tugwell could see the chance for major reconstruction of economic institutions fading rapidly, and even old friends of Roosevelt from the Wilson days—certainly far from radical—warned the President-elect against being taken over by conservatives. Other leaders urged him to emulate Grover Cleveland and stand firm against radicals in the Democratic party. One of Roosevelt's few specific programmatic commitments was announced on January 21, when he and Progressive Republican Senator Norris visited northern Alabama together and announced plans for a great comprehensive development program for the Tennessee River area, to be built around the controversial government-owned Muscle Shoals dam and power facilities. There were a few other signs, toward inauguration, that encouraged the progressives. For the most part, however, Roosevelt remained evasive while his advisers argued, merely urging them to have faith and be prepared for experimentation.[10]

[9] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 453; Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), pp. 63-65; Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, Vol. 3 (1952), pp. 199-202.

[10] Schlesinger, *op. cit., pp.* 452-55.

THE NEW DEAL CABINET

As already noted, Roosevelt made it clear shortly after election that he did not intend to make any quick decisions about his cabinet. As it turned out, his negotiations with the Hoover administration and heavy involvement in legislative and other policy matters delayed the decisions even longer than he had expected. Roosevelt also found that reaching decisions in his own mind was by no means the end of the matter; getting the prospects to accept was a frustrating and time-consuming job.

There is some evidence that Roosevelt's first thoughts about appointments concerned his inner circle. Even before election, Roosevelt once mentioned to Jim Farley the possibility of becoming Postmaster General and indicated one or two other men he had in mind for cabinet office. He asked Farley to be thinking of people in the campaign organization who ought to be rewarded.[11] By the latter part of November, it was apparently settled that Louis Howe would be Secretary to the President —an almost inevitable choice. At that time Roosevelt told Moley that Stephen Early and Marvin MacIntyre would be Assistant Secretaries for Press Relations and Appointments, respectively. This was preliminary to Roosevelt's saying that although he had considered Moley for Administrative Assistant, the only other job of significance on the White House staff as it was then organized, he had decided against it out of deference to Howe's jealousy of potential rivals.[12] He would put Moley over in the State Department instead.[13]

At first, Roosevelt fended off Howe and others who were ready to plunge into cabinet-making right after election. The open season on the cabinet really began with FDR's conferences with party leaders and other dignitaries during his trip to Washington and Warm Springs in late November and early December. At this stage he received suggestions and tried out a few names in a tentative way but was still far from committing himself. In the early part of January, after he was free of the governorship, he moved into a stage of active consideration of possibilities and narrowing of alternatives. In this period many of his friends were asked their opinions of particular individuals and some-

[11] James A. Farley, *Behind The Ballots* (1938), p. 183.

[12] One is entitled to suspect that Howe had already made clear to his old friend his feelings on that subject.

[13] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

times authorized to do some discreet checking on people with whom FDR was not completely familiar. In some cases there apparently also were roundabout probes to find out whether a prospect was likely to accept if he were chosen.

The first offers were made late in January, during and shortly after Roosevelt's second visit to Washington. The recipients of these offers, as Moley noted with some disgust, usually reacted by "blushing, stammering, swooning, and rushing off in confusion to the nearest gazebo," instead of giving an immediate answer, so that most of the appointments were still not settled by the time Roosevelt left for his yachting vacation on February 4. Moley and Howe rounded up a few acceptances during his absence, but most of the prospects wanted to be persuaded by Roosevelt himself, and some could not be persuaded at all. Completing the cabinet was first priority business from February 15, when Roosevelt came ashore at Miami, until February 22, when he filled the last vacancy. The newspapers had the complete but "unofficial" list on February 23,[14] and Roosevelt doled out public statements about the appointments during the succeeding week. But even this did not end it, as one of the designees died unexpectedly on March 2 and Roosevelt had to make a last-minute substitution.

Personal Choices

The decisions about the cabinet appointments were made by FDR in a highly personal way. To be sure, he was genial about receiving suggestions, and several of his associates had the pleasure of seeing individuals they had recommended appointed, but to no one, except possibly Louis Howe, did he fully reveal his reasoning or invite argument. Moley acted as intermediary with several of the prospects while they were considering offers, but only in one or two cases was he involved in the original selections. Farley, despite a popular notion that the national chairman had much to say about such matters, remained on the fringes of the cabinet decisions, although he was influential in filling some of the subcabinet posts.

Despite the proportions of Roosevelt's electoral victory, it would be a mistake to say that he had complete freedom of choice in assembling his cabinet. There were obligations to individuals who had played key parts

[14] *New York Times* (Feb. 23, 1933).

in his campaign organization, as well as the traditional expectations that he would "recognize" various factions, regions, religions, and other groups—including Congress—in the official family. But these were general criteria of selection that did not tie specific individuals to specific jobs. There was no single outstanding figure who had to be taken into the cabinet as Wilson took in Bryan. There was no single faction on which Roosevelt was likely to depend for support; he headed a coalition of old Wilsonian progressives, new Democratic leaders who had ridden the Roosevelt bandwagon to success, and former insurgent Republicans. The previous titular leader, Al Smith, and many others of the elder generation of party leaders, had put themselves beyond consideration by the bitterness of their fight against Roosevelt's nomination. Garner, who had let the Texas votes be switched to Roosevelt to break a threatened deadlock at the convention, had received his reward in the Vice Presidency. The only claim of this sort known to be outstanding was in the hands of William Gibbs McAdoo, who had switched the California delegation to Roosevelt at the critical moment. McAdoo wanted no office himself, but in the excitement at Chicago, Dan Roper, who had managed McAdoo's campaign for the nomination in 1924, apparently had promised McAdoo that Roosevelt would clear the two top cabinet appointments with him.[15] There may have been one or two other understandings of a vague sort. But for a politician of Roosevelt's skill, such limitations were not likely to prove unduly restrictive; as Presidents-elect go, he was a free man.

A Curious Combination at State

Roosevelt began by considering the top-ranking post of Secretary of State. While he made up his mind relatively quickly, it took a month to complete the arrangements. Furthermore, the arrangements as made contained the seeds of later troubles.

Just before Christmas, according to Moley, FDR had three men in mind for this post. One was Robert W. Bingham, publisher of the *Louisville Courier-Journal,* who was being touted by good old "Colonel Mouse," as Roosevelt usually referred to the tiptoeing kingmaker from the Wilson days. Another was Owen D. Young, a prominent businessman (General Electric), who had been mentioned as a possible Demo-

[15] See letter to the editor, *New York Times Book Review* (June 22, 1958), by Brice McAdoo Clagett (McAdoo's grandson), citing letters and documents in possession of the family that bear out this contention.

cratic candidate in 1932. The third was Senator Cordell Hull of Tennessee, a highly respected party leader since the Wilson era.[16] By mid-January the choice clearly was Hull. Bingham was apparently too obscure, and Young, on hearing that he was being considered, got word to Roosevelt that he could not accept any appointment for personal reasons. Louis Howe had been strong for Hull from the beginning. On January 19 or 20, when Roosevelt was in Washington to see Hoover, he summoned Hull to the Mayflower and offered him the job. Hull asked for time to think about it. On February 1, he went to Warm Springs to talk to Roosevelt again but still could not decide.[17]

Roosevelt's liaison with Hull during this period of indecision was through Moley, who had remained in Washington to keep in touch with the State Department and do various errands. Moley became increasingly concerned about this appointment. In the first place, he could not understand how FDR could square the idea of appointing a free trader like Hull with the sort of economic policies he and the other members of the Brain Trust were advocating and to which the President-elect was presumably committed. Furthermore, as soon as word got around Washington that Hull had been tapped, several senators let Moley know that although Hull was respected among his colleagues for his sincerity and years of service to the Democratic cause, they could not visualize him as a diplomat; many thought his competence in foreign affairs was limited by his fierce devotion to free trade. This information was duly conveyed to FDR, who was not budged by it.

Moley also was concerned for personal reasons. He worried about being an assistant secretary, nominally under Hull but informally working most of the time for Roosevelt. At Warm Springs on February 3, according to his own account, he again tried to back out of the arrangement. Finally, to reassure Moley about the area he would have under his domain, FDR dictated, and Moley wrote in his notebook, a sentence describing the duties he would have, which included ". . . the foreign debts, the world economic conference, supervision of the economic adviser's office and such additional duties as the president may direct in the general field of foreign and domestic government."[18]

[16] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

[17] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. 1 (1948), pp. 157-58; Louis B. Wehle, *Hidden Threads of History* (1953), pp. 129-30, claims that FDR sent him to inquire informally about Hull's availability in mid-January. Hull does not mention this.

[18] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

Moley returned to Washington with instructions to see Hull, get a final answer, and convey it by radio to Roosevelt, who would be on the Astor yacht. It now appeared that Hull was concerned about the heavy entertaining and other social obligations the job might entail. Howe suggested getting around this by appointing as Under Secretary an experienced hand on the diplomatic and social circuit. He proposed a friend of Roosevelt's from the Wilson period, William Phillips, but nothing could be done about it until Roosevelt returned. Meanwhile garbled rumors about Moley and his relations with Hull, Phillips, and Sumner Welles—who was also being mentioned for Under Secretary—began to appear in the papers. Moley became panicky and wanted to release to the press the short statement Roosevelt had given him about his duties, but Howe and Josephus Daniels talked him out of it.

When Roosevelt returned to Miami on February 15, Moley and Howe met him and explained their idea about the Phillips appointment. Hull then was asked to meet Roosevelt's train south of Washington the following day. He boarded at Richmond, Virginia, and between there and Washington he agreed to take the appointment. His last-minute concern apparently was whether Roosevelt intended to accord the Secretary of State a proper role in the conduct of foreign affairs. Little, if anything, was said about Moley and Phillips.[19] Thus the State Department was "balanced" with a rough-hewn, free-trading, former senator as Secretary; a retired diplomat as Under Secretary; and a touchy former professor, who knew in advance that his policies were unlike those of the other two but had reason to believe that he would be closer to the President, as Assistant Secretary. Curiously, although Moley agreed to take the job, he told friends that he did not intend to stay in Washington more than a month.[20]

Two More Senators

On January 19, on the same visit to Washington in which he first offered the State portfolio to Hull, Roosevelt invited Senator Carter Glass of Virginia to be Secretary of the Treasury. Glass had been one of the authors of the original Federal Reserve Act in 1913, had served

[19] Wehle, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30, claims that he warned Hull not to accept unless he was given adequate control of his subordinates, but Hull was too diffident to take this firm stand.

[20] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-18; Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, pp. 157-58.

briefly as Secretary of the Treasury later in Wilson's administration, and in the succeeding years had emerged as the Democratic party's leading spokesman—and a staunch defender of orthodoxy—on matters of finance, banking, and currency.

Glass hesitated for several weeks, while Moley relayed messages between him and FDR. Glass first wanted to know if he would have a free hand in selecting his associates; he particularly wanted with him a former Treasury colleague now with the Morgan banking firm. Roosevelt vetoed that idea. Then Glass wanted assurance that Roosevelt did not intend to resort to inflationary monetary policies. Roosevelt would offer no guarantees on that point either.[21] These answers did not lead Glass to reject the offer immediately, but he raised a question about the health of himself and his wife. By that time Roosevelt had left on his cruise, leaving instructions with Moley to get a definite decision out of Glass. On February 8, Glass handed Moley a letter declining the place.

Howe and Moley began looking for an alternative and decided that William Woodin, an original Roosevelt backer and a respected businessman, would be the best bet. But then it became apparent that Glass's letter had not ended the matter. On his way back to New York from his Florida vacation, Roosevelt had Glass board his train in Washington. They discussed the appointment from Washington to Baltimore without reaching a conclusion. On February 19, after a busy day of telephoning back and forth between Roosevelt and Glass, it became definite that Glass would remain in the Senate.[22]

That same evening, Roosevelt summoned Woodin and offered him the job. Woodin was reluctant, but the next day, after O'Connor and others in the Roosevelt group had urged him, he accepted.[23]

[21] ". . . 'Make it perfectly clear to him that, so far as subordinates go, we simply can't tie up with "23" [Morgan & Co.],' F.D.R. said. And 'So far as inflation goes, you can say that *we're not going to throw ideas out of the window simply because they're labeled inflation.* If you feel that the old boy doesn't want to go along, don't press him.' " Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[22] According to Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 122, Glass's written refusal did not end it because old friends like Baruch and Admiral Grayson persuaded him to reconsider. Glass's biographers, on the other hand, claim that Roosevelt himself kept the matter open by refusing to take no for an answer until February 19. (Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, *Carter Glass,* 1939, pp. 334-37.) Both sources agree that it was a combination of reluctance to leave the Senate, personal health (Glass was then 75 and had always been frail), and Roosevelt's refusal to be pinned down on currency policy that led Glass finally to decline. Some members of the Roosevelt group had the impression that Roosevelt felt it desirable to offer the appointment because of Glass's eminence but hoped from the beginning that he would refuse. Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

[23] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

It was apparently on his January 19 visit to Washington, when he offered cabinet posts to Glass and Hull, that Roosevelt also asked Senator Thomas J. Walsh to be Attorney General. Walsh was a progressive from Montana, widely respected in the party, and was still remembered for his investigation that had exposed the Teapot Dome scandal. Walsh also was in no hurry to give an answer. Moley was still negotiating with him at the end of the first week of February, one of the problems being Walsh's reluctance to accept if Roosevelt persisted in his intention to appoint Felix Frankfurter as Solicitor General. Roosevelt finally yielded on that point, and Walsh accepted.[24]

Some Political Rewards

The War and Navy portfolios were disposed of fairly quickly. Governor George Dern of Utah, an early supporter in the West, was one of those Roosevelt had in mind for a cabinet post, probably Interior, even before election. When he came to active consideration of cabinet jobs, he got the impression that Dern was a little too conservative for Interior and did not have the confidence of the conservationists, so he switched him to the War Department. The Navy Department post was offered to Senator Claude A. Swanson of Virginia, after Glass was definitely out at the Treasury.[25] The offhand manner in which these posts were distributed suggests the slight importance national defense was considered to have in 1933.

The office of Secretary of Commerce figured in some complicated political maneuvering. The leading aspirant for the post among the Roosevelt insiders was Jesse Straus, president of Macy's department store and a heavy campaign contributor. In the early stages of slatemaking, Straus seemed almost certain to get the job. In mid-January, however, just as Roosevelt completed his tentative slate, he was visited by McAdoo, who had been promised a voice in the choices for State and Treasury. McAdoo apparently thought Hull a fine choice. What he

[24] *Ibid.* and reproduction of pages from Moley's notebook, opposite p. 146. From the latter, it appears that the Frankfurter problem was still unsettled on February 7 or 8. Since Moley was not likely to have taken it on himself to recede on the Frankfurter matter, this was probably settled shortly after Roosevelt's return from his early February vacation.

[25] Swanson had held one of the top posts in Farley's national campaign organization. Moley notes that there was a special purpose in offering a cabinet job to Virginia—namely, to make a place in the Senate which retiring Governor Harry F. Byrd could fill. *Ibid.*, p. 123. Smith and Beasley, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-35, confirm this.

thought of the tentative appointment of Glass has never been reported, although it is a reasonable assumption that he was unhappy about it; they had been on opposite sides of a good many political fences.[26] But Roosevelt apparently went ahead on the Treasury despite McAdoo's objections. Then, perhaps to appease McAdoo, he named Daniel S. Roper, who had made the original deal with McAdoo, for Secretary of Commerce.[27]

After mentioning to Farley before election that he might become Postmaster General, Roosevelt said no more about it until the cabinet making was well along. However, he apparently never seriously considered anyone else for the job. One day in a conference, he referred indirectly to Hoover's Postmaster General as "Jim's predecessor." Farley seized the hint and said, "Thanks, I accept."[28]

Two Republicans and a Lady

Finding a Secretary of Agriculture was not difficult. During the summer, Morgenthau and Tugwell had found and brought into Roosevelt's orbit Henry A. Wallace of Iowa. Wallace was the third-generation editor of *Wallace's Farmer,* son of the Secretary of Agriculture in Harding's cabinet, and himself a serious student of both the technology and the economics of agriculture. He was now one of the leading spokesmen for a group of Midwestern agrarians who had become increasingly restless in the Republican party of the 1920's and were in process of transition to the Democrats. By election time Tugwell was actively urging Wallace for Secretary of Agriculture; indeed, there was probably no one else who combined so many strands of eligibility. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., would have liked the job, but his standing in the field of agriculture was hardly comparable to Wallace's, and he was content with a post below cabinet rank. When Wallace visited Roosevelt at Warm Springs late in November to discuss a farm bill for the lame duck Congress, the question of his appointment was raised but not settled. Early in February, when Roosevelt was at Warm Springs on his second visit, he wrote Wallace a letter offering him the job. Moley and Tugwell followed up by telephone and

[26] It is known that McAdoo later objected to the appointment of Woodin on the ground that he was too conservative. Brice McAdoo Clagett, letter to the editor of the *New York Times Book Review* (June 22, 1958). If Woodin was a conservative Glass was a reactionary.

[27] Moley, *op. cit.,* pp. 124-25.

[28] Lindley, *op. cit.,* p. 57.

got Wallace's acceptance before Roosevelt returned from his yachting trip.[29]

Roosevelt apparently decided early in the cabinet-making to set aside the Interior portfolio for one of the progressive Republicans, thus recognizing the leading custodians of the conservationist tradition stemming from the early TR and Pinchot days. Senator Hiram Johnson was offered the post first, but he turned it down almost immediately. Senator Bronson Cutting of New Mexico took the offer under consideration and at mid-February still had not decided. About that time, Roosevelt asked Johnson and Cutting to designate a progressive Republican to sit in on the preparations for the international economic talks. They named Harold L. Ickes, who was eager for some post in the new administration. Ickes was invited to a meeting at Roosevelt's house in New York on February 22. Before the meeting he heard that Cutting had definitely declined the Interior job. Determining to shoot for the top, he wangled an introduction to Arthur Mullen of Nebraska, who had been one of Roosevelt's floor managers at the Chicago convention and an insider of the campaign organization, and told Mullen he wanted to be Secretary of Interior. Mullen agreed to telephone Roosevelt and tell him about Ickes' ambitions. The next day, after the meeting in which they met for the first time (and in which Ickes took an inconspicuous part, being overshadowed by such dignitaries as Baruch), Roosevelt called Ickes back into the room and told him he was thinking about appointing him to Interior. Since he had not investigated him at all, he wanted to check with a few more people. Before Ickes returned for a second interview that evening, Roosevelt had decided. "I liked the cut of his jib," he told the incredulous Moley.[30]

The Labor post was settled on the same day. Having had from the beginning the idea of appointing a woman to his cabinet, and not liking the idea of turning the Labor Department over to a man who was directly designated by the unions (Roosevelt's close alliance with organized labor was yet to come), he settled on Frances Perkins, his commissioner of labor in New York. Mary Dewson, who had run the women's activities during the campaign, had organized a campaign for Miss Perkins. Hearing of the talk, Miss Perkins wrote to Roosevelt on February 1 to

[29] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 123n; Russell Lord, *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947), pp. 323-25.

[30] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-27; Harold L. Ickes, *Autobiography of a Curmudgeon* (1943), pp. 265-71. The latter is that rare thing, a cabinet biography or autobiography that says candidly that the hero deliberately sought the post.

express doubts; someone from organized labor really ought to have the job, she said. This apparently had no effect. On February 22, FDR summoned her and offered her the job. After reminding him again of all the reasons why she would not do, she accepted.[31]

A Principle of Selection?

Except for the inclusion of the first woman to hold such a post, the cabinet as announced seemed a traditional sort of group. It had sectional balance, it included several men likely to hold the confidence of Congress, and it gathered together both old Wilsonians and more recently emergent elements in the Democratic party. A special point had been made to welcome erstwhile Republicans—Ickes, Wallace, and Woodin all were nominal members of the GOP. From the outside it did not look like a particularly outstanding group, especially in the metropolitan East; there were none who had been counted in the first rank of national leaders in business or public affairs. Even as late as 1939, Moley remained baffled about the principle, if any, behind the whole thing. But his colleague Tugwell, writing somewhat later, thought he could see a simple principle. It was Roosevelt's cabinet. All its members had been for Roosevelt before the Chicago convention. There were no hostages to opposing party factions or to the big pressure groups of business, agriculture, or labor. So far as could be foreseen, there were no future presidential candidates. It was a group to support—or at least not to impede—the exercise of presidential power.[32]

PATRONAGE

On the first of February, shortly after Roosevelt had made the first round of offers to his first choices for the cabinet, he called Farley, Flynn, Walker, and Howe to Warm Springs to discuss the appointments to other leading posts and patronage policy generally. Lists of men suitable for appointment were assembled and discussed. The deliberations were aided by a series of confidential reports on what had happened in

[31] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 470; Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (1946), pp. 150-52.

[32] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt*, pp. 268-69; James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (1956), pp. 149-50.

each state delegation at the Democratic convention.[33] Several of the principal noncabinet jobs were distributed at that time, in most cases confirming understandings that had been developing gradually over the past several weeks. Lewis Douglas would be Director of the Budget; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., would be Chairman of the Farm Board; Jesse Jones of Texas, already serving on the board of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, was scheduled for elevation to the chairmanship; and Homer S. Cummings of Connecticut, another old warhorse from the Wilson era, was slated for Governor General of the Philippines.

The appointments to departmental posts of undersecretary, assistant secretary, and comparable rank were discussed but could be settled in only a few cases because most of the cabinet appointments themselves were still not settled. Farley's future as Postmaster General was apparently established so that he could pick his principal lieutenants about this time. The job as Assistant Secretary of State, about which Roosevelt had spoken to Moley earlier, was still reserved for him. Roosevelt thought about Tugwell for Assistant Secretary of Commerce but soon switched him to Agriculture at Wallace's request. The latter's warm invitation resolved Tugwell's previous doubts about entering the government.[34] Adolph Berle was slated for a seat on the Federal Trade Commission, which he later declined, and Frankfurter was put down for Solicitor General, which also never worked out.[35]

The fact that only a few subcabinet appointments were decided before inauguration was related to a major policy adopted at the early February meeting of FDR and his political advisers. It was decided to

[33] Farley, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34.

[34] From the dates at which the various subcabinet officers were sworn in, it would appear that the four assistant postmasters general and the several cases in which Roosevelt more or less imposed previous personal choices on the department head were almost the only ones that were settled before inauguration.

[35] Sam Rosenman, for one, advised Roosevelt against giving the Brain Trusters departmental administrative posts of this kind; his recommendation, which later experience seemed to validate, was to keep them as a staff group for research, writing, and other duties of the sort they had been performing so usefully. (Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt,* 1952, pp. 87-88). One can only speculate why Roosevelt disregarded what seems in retrospect to have been such sensible advice. One obvious reason was that the White House staff, as then established, included no suitable jobs for men of this type, except possibly the Secretary to the President postmarked for Howe. It is difficult to believe, however, that Roosevelt could not have arranged to have Moley and the others directly available in a staff capacity if he had wanted them badly enough. A guess is here ventured that Roosevelt wanted them available but did not want to commit himself to them as his principal advisers. As assistant secretaries they could either be used or allowed to get lost in their departments, at his pleasure.

hold back as much as possible on appointments, and on patronage generally, until the end of the post-inaugural special session of Congress. The receptivity of legislators to presidential suggestions was certain to be sharpened if major patronage remained to be dispensed.[36]

The climax of Roosevelt's preparatory period came on February 15, when an attempt to assassinate him almost succeeded. It was at Miami, as Roosevelt returned from his two weeks at sea. He and his party, seated in open cars, were at an open-air reception. The crowd gathered around, and it was dusk. Giuseppe Zangara, an unemployed bricklayer with a burning hatred for all authority, suddenly pulled out a pistol and emptied it in Roosevelt's direction from a distance of about thirty-five feet. Perhaps because a woman in the crowd jostled his arm, he missed the President-elect. Mayor Anthony Cermak of Chicago, standing by Roosevelt's car, received a wound from which he died a few days later, and several others received minor wounds.

As police seized Zangara, Roosevelt reassured the crowd and had Cermak put into his car for a dash to the hospital. Throughout a hectic evening he remained cool and undisturbed. Even after the excitement was over and he was back on the boat with a few friends, he showed no signs of fear or letdown. ". . . I have never in my life seen anything more magnificent than Roosevelt's calm that night," wrote Moley.[37] Whatever doubt might remain as to his political convictions, the President-elect clearly had personal courage.

[36] Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-28; Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt*, p. 266; Ernest K. Lindley in *New York Herald Tribune* (Feb. 2, 1933). It should be admitted that Farley, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40, denies that patronage was deliberately withheld and claims that the delay in dispensing it was due merely to the press of other business at the opening of the administration; but Farley's protest can be discounted with reasonable safety, since he was still in the administration at the time he wrote.

[37] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

CHAPTER 25

THE CRISIS

In the final month of President Hoover's term, the nation reached the bottom of the depression. Financial panic swept the country and paralyzed most of the banking system. Events moved so rapidly that the implications for human suffering of this collapse of the economic superstructure were only dimly perceived, but the psychological effects were tremendous. The middle and upper classes, which had not been directly hit by low farm prices and widespread industrial unemployment, now felt the shocking impact of the depression. A wave of fear swept over the nation.

THE BANKING CRISIS

With the deepening of the depression, bank failures had become increasingly common.[1] As a result of low commodity prices, depressed levels of trade, stagnating industry, and business failures in its community, a bank would find its assets declining in value, its investments unproductive, and its loans—often even interest—uncollectible. Securities, real estate, commodities, or other assets pledged by borrowers could be taken over but would yield little in the prevailing market. If its holdings continued to deteriorate in value, the bank might have difficulty maintaining sufficient cash or easily negotiable assets to meet its obliga-

[1] A useful account of the banking crisis by the then Undersecretary of the Treasury, a key participant in the central events, is Arthur A. Ballantine, "When All the Banks Closed," *Harvard Business Review,* Vol. 26 (March 1948), pp. 129-43.

tions and carry on day-to-day business. Fortunate institutions were able to borrow on their assets, or raise new capital, and thus keep going. But if such help could not be secured, or if the assets had been frittered away on speculative investments or manipulations for the benefit of insiders, the bank might have to close its doors. If it became known that a bank was in difficulty, the depositors might hasten the end by mass withdrawals of deposits. After a bank was closed, the remaining depositors would eventually get some—often most—of their money back, but for the time being the savings of individuals and the working capital of businesses would be immobilized.

At first, the failures were mainly the small enterprises, the "country banks" with modest capitalization and slender reserves, but as the depression went on, the larger institutions became affected. Failure of one bank would start a "run" on the deposits of neighboring banks, or bring down smaller banks that had used it as a depository for their reserves. By the early part of 1932, large banks in such cities as Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit were in difficulty. After midyear the situation seemed a little better, as the stronger banks rallied to help the weaker ones and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a newly established federal agency, made generous loans to banks against the potential value of their assets. In January 1933, however, a new wave of closings began. Failures led to runs and more failures. As fear spread, people stopped putting money in banks and began hoarding. Paralleling the flight from the banks, there was a flight from the dollar, as depositors demanded not paper money but gold. Speculators made heavy investments in foreign currencies. Banking authorities became alarmed as the gold held in the Federal Reserve system began to escape into hoarding or was transferred abroad to balance foreign currency purchases.

In early February 1933, the situation became acute in Michigan, where about 200 banks had failed in the previous month. Two of the largest institutions in Detroit were in serious trouble, and if they failed, they might bring down most of the remaining banks in the state. There were frantic discussions between Detroit businessmen and officials of the Treasury Department and the R.F.C., with even President Hoover taking a hand. Finally, the negotiations broke down, and on February 14 the governor of Michigan declared a "banking holiday." All the banks in the state were closed temporarily while authorities tried to sort out the strong from the weak banks and devise some means of keeping them

going. The Michigan closing shocked the business world, and panic ensued elsewhere, leading to more closings. By March 2, banking holidays had been declared in ten states, and the major banks in New York and other large cities—pillars of the financial structure—were beginning to crumble.

A Strange Appeal

Shortly after the Michigan bank holiday was declared, FDR completed his Florida vacation. Speculation and public controversy over what the new administration should and would do about banks, debts, and money had been intense for several weeks. Even President Hoover had joined the argument with a Lincoln's birthday address in New York—his last major speech as President—in which he called for no inflation, unflinching adherence to the gold standard, and international action to stabilize currencies. Roosevelt was not unaware of the banking situation, but he did not yet perceive that anything catastrophic would happen before inauguration. More immediately on his mind was the fact that he had only two weeks in which to tie up several loose ends about the cabinet, write an inaugural address, and complete other preparations.

On February 17, the day Roosevelt returned to New York, a Secret Service messenger brought a long handwritten letter from Hoover.[2] Hoover's purpose was to call his attention to the "most critical" banking situation and request his aid. The major difficulty, Hoover said, was the "state of the public mind." "I am convinced," he said, "that a very early statement by you upon two or three policies of your Administration would serve greatly to restore confidence and cause a resumption of the march of recovery." Hoover then proceeded with an analysis of the situation that invited an argument from Roosevelt or any other Democrat on almost every line. Twice, he said, the policies of his administration had stopped the economic deterioration and restored confidence, only to have untoward events set off new declines. The most recent disturbance had been the election, which brought a "natural and inevitable hesitation all along the economic line." Since then the situation had been made worse by the failure of Congress to enact banking and bankruptcy legislation

[2] According to Hoover (*The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover,* Vol. 3, 1952, p. 202) he had been "trying to communicate with the President-elect" since February 6, but was put off by Roosevelt's aides who insisted that FDR would not be available until after his vacation. None of the memoirs of Roosevelt's associates mentions this.

and balance the budget, the publicity given to R.F.C. loans, the continuing speculation about inflation, and "all the chatter about dictatorship."[3] There was now a "state of alarm which is rapidly approaching the dimensions of a crisis." To restore confidence, the public needed certain assurances that only Roosevelt could give. ". . . It would steady the country greatly if there could be prompt assurance that there will be no tampering or inflation of the currency; that the budget will be unquestionably balanced, even if further taxation is necessary; that the Government credit will be maintained by refusal to exhaust it in the issue of securities." For good measure, he also suggested that Roosevelt use his influence to stop Congress from publishing the R.F.C. transactions.[4]

Roosevelt and his aides were almost aghast. Hoover's letter seemed embarrassing, irritating, unrealistic, and a little ridiculous. It was embarrassing because, in one sense, Hoover was only asking Roosevelt to reaffirm promises he had made during the campaign; statements about budget balancing and sound money were on the record and could not be denied. But in a situation that called for tact and persuasion, Hoover exuded belligerence and self-righteousness. Did he really expect Roosevelt to agree that the depression had been under control and that the Democratic victory was responsible for prolonging it? At any rate, the situation had changed a great deal since the campaign. It now seemed clear to Roosevelt that some sort of monetary inflation was going to be necessary to get prices up and relieve the pressure on debtors. Although he was more inclined to agree with Hoover about economy and budget balancing, how could he guarantee that Congress, which had shown a distressing tendency to go its own way since election, would keep appropriations down or vote new taxes? And if specific assurances could not be given, what good was there in vague statements? Hoover did not seem to realize that his own unsuccessful attempts to restore confidence by hopeful statements had helped greatly to undermine his prestige. As for the banks, there was a problem of confidence, to be sure, but it was not a matter of the moment; confidence had been slipping away for several years, hastened by the exposure of things the bankers themselves had done. The plain truth was that the banks were in bad shape and

[3] This last referred to some of the extravagant language just used in the Senate, as that body passed the rider giving the new President unprecedented discretion over government organization and functions.

[4] Complete text of the letter is in William Starr Myers and Walter H. Newton, *The Hoover Administration* (1936), pp. 338-40.

could not be restored to health by reassuring statements and palliative measures. Important reforms, including monetary reforms, might be required, and Roosevelt could not promise otherwise. Such was the thinking in the Roosevelt camp.[5]

Hoover's letter remained unanswered while Roosevelt wrestled with the practical problem of getting Glass's answer about the Treasury.

A Reasonable Proposal

As he waited for Roosevelt to respond, Hoover shrank from taking a moderate course of action to which Roosevelt, at that time, might have given his approval. On February 20, Republican Senator David A. Reed of Pennsylvania reported to Hoover that some of the Democratic senators were suggesting that Hoover take action to stop the hoarding and flight from the dollar by suspending specie payments (*i.e.,* forbidding the banks to give out gold in exchange for paper money) and restricting the export of gold. If Hoover took the lead by executive action, Reed said, the Senate would probably back him.[6]

The idea of such controls was not new, having been discussed at least once earlier in the depression when there had been a temporary run on gold. The authority usually cited was a Trading with the Enemy Act left over from the World War. Although much amended and of dubious status in peacetime, it gave the President at least a shadow of authority to control transactions in foreign exchange and hoarding of silver, gold, and currency. Roosevelt already had investigated this legislation and had decided, with the concurrence of his prospective Attorney General, Senator Walsh, that the authority might, in an emergency, be used.[7]

It is not certain what Hoover thought about the proposal at this time. On strictly logical grounds, of course, it was contradictory to the policy urged in his letter to Roosevelt. Suspending specie payments and the free flow of gold would be a retreat from pure convertibility, a confession that confidence already was lost. It would be fighting fire with fire and was the next thing to going off the gold standard, which he wanted to avoid at all costs. For a President like Hoover, who took a limited view

[5] Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), pp. 70-77; Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), pp. 262-64; Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), pp. 140-43; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957), pp. 476-77.

[6] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.,* p. 240.

[7] Lindley, *op. cit.,* p. 78.

of the constitutional powers of the Executive, there were also legal inhibitions. In addition to doubts about the status of the Trading with the Enemy Act, he feared that presidential action in this field would be considered a trespass on the authority of the independent Federal Reserve system. However, Treasury Secretary Mills and one or two other members of the Federal Reserve Board were known to favor such a step, and Hoover apparently was willing at least to contemplate taking it if he could get the board to go on record as recommending or endorsing it. Two days after Reed's inquiry, Hoover sent a letter calling the attention of the board to the increase in hoarding and flight of capital and inquiring if there were any recommendations.[8] The board's answer, on February 25, was roundabout and negative.[9]

A Stand for the Record

At any rate, while he was sounding out the Federal Reserve, Hoover continued his demands that Roosevelt come forward with guarantees that the Hoover policies would be continued. His written reply to Reed's suggestion reiterated the theme of his letter to Roosevelt and recommended that the Democratic senators be mobilized to put pressure on Roosevelt to make the desired statement. He closed with the following:

> I realize that if these declarations be made by the President-elect, he will have ratified the whole major program of the Republican Administration; that is, it means the abandonment of 90 per cent of the so-called new deal. But unless this is done, they run a grave danger of precipitating a complete financial debacle. If it is precipitated, the responsibility lies squarely with them for they have had ample warning—unless, of course, such a debacle is part of the "new deal."[10]

The following day, February 21, Hoover gave an even more extended version of the entire thesis in a letter, obviously intended for display on the Hill, to Republican Senator Simeon Fess of Ohio. The whole

[8] Hoover, *Memoirs,* Vol. 3, p. 210; Myers and Newton, *op. cit.,* p. 355. The uncertainty indicated above about the timing of the evolution of President Hoover's views is because of certain gaps and inconsistencies in the accounts given in the *Memoirs* and in the fuller documented account of Myers and Newton. Unfortunately, while quoting Hoover's reply to Senator Reed, Myers and Newton, p. 341, delete the section in which he responds specifically to the suggestion that he proclaim monetary controls.

[9] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.,* p. 357.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 341.

history of the depression was reviewed from the Hoover viewpoint, the Democratic record in Congress was attacked, and the failure of the President-elect to come forward with reassurances was dwelt on. From its emphasis on the sins of the "Democratic House" and a favorable reference to Senator Glass, whose refusal to enter the Cabinet was now generally known, it appears that Hoover intended the letter as an indirect appeal to Glass and some of his fellow-conservatives on the Senate side.[11] However, it was almost inevitable that Roosevelt would hear of the sort of language Hoover was using in these letters, and almost inconceivable that such demands would bring any results.

Roosevelt Plans

Shortly after receiving Hoover's letter, Roosevelt succeeded in maneuvering Glass out of the way and getting Woodin to accept the post at the Treasury. He and Woodin and Moley began spending long hours in conference with New York bankers, but they got little advice that seemed usable. Mainly the bankers echoed Hoover's plea for "reassuring" pledges of a sort that Roosevelt was neither willing nor able to give, or dreamed of massive infusions of R.F.C. funds far beyond the then authorized lending capacity of that agency. "These New York bankers haven't any more notion of public psychology than a chicken," Roosevelt observed to one visitor.[12] Mills descended on Woodin, as soon as the latter's designation was announced, with urgent pleas that he get Roosevelt to make a statement or make one himself. Woodin insisted he was not authorized to make any commitments.[13]

Although Roosevelt was not to be enticed into public statements, there were increasing signs that he looked with favor on use of the powers in the Trading with the Enemy Act. On February 25, an industrialist called the White House to report that he had got the Roosevelt position straight from Tugwell: The banking situation was undoubtedly serious, but anything that happened would be laid to Hoover; after March 4, the new administration would move in with a program of stopping gold exports, suspending specie payments, and "reflation if necessary." This sanguinity made Hoover furious. ". . . I can say emphatically that he breathes with infamous politics devoid of every atom of patriotism. Mr.

[11] *Ibid., pp.* 351-54.
[12] Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-77.
[13] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-44.

Tugwell would project millions of people into hideous losses for a Roman holiday."[14]

A FATEFUL WEEK

On Monday, February 27, President Hoover and his associates took stock as they began their final week of responsibility. The banking situation had taken a rapid turn for the worse. Many more banks had failed to reopen after the week end, and a banking holiday had been declared by the governor of Maryland; other statewide closings were imminent. It was ten days since Hoover's appeal to Roosevelt, and still no direct reply. Some of Hoover's advisers now suggested that he make a public demand that the President-elect come forward with the guarantees considered necessary to restore confidence. If Roosevelt did so, the panic might be stemmed; if he refused, the public would hold him responsible for the consequences. Hoover refused to accept this counsel of desperation, apparently recognizing that it was too late for reassuring statements to have much effect. But he still hoped for Roosevelt's cooperation on lesser measures.[15]

A Moderate Letter and a Lame Response

On February 28, Hoover wrote again to Roosevelt, this time briefly and in a moderate tone. He reported that the financial situation had become much more serious since his previous letter. A declaration from Roosevelt, he indicated, would still be useful, but he did not press the point. His main purpose was to raise the question whether Roosevelt wanted him to issue a call for a special session of the new Congress to begin on or shortly after inauguration day. Although he proposed no specific measures, he assured Roosevelt that he and the other members of his administration were at the President-elect's service and wished to be cooperative in every way.[16]

This evoked a response from Roosevelt. He began by saying: "I am

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 356. It should be pointed out that in this period Tugwell was busy with agriculture and other matters and had no significant part in FDR's activities in relation to the banking crisis.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 358-59.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 360.

dismayed to find that the inclosed which I wrote in New York a week ago did not go to you, through an assumption by my secretary that it was only a draft of a letter." He went on to acknowledge Hoover's most recent letter and "fine spirit of cooperation." He assured Hoover that he was keeping in touch with the banking situation through Woodin and agreed that a special session would be necessary; he would let Hoover know shortly when he wanted it called. The "inclosed" letter, whose delay Roosevelt so casually explained, gave Hoover little comfort. In response to the request for reassurances, Roosevelt observed that the difficulty was "so very deep-seated that the fire is bound to spread in spite of anything that is done by way of mere statements. The real trouble is that on present values very few financial institutions . . . are actually able to pay off their deposits in full, and the knowledge of this fact is widely held." While the announcement about the Secretary of the Treasury that he was about to make might have some effect, he doubted that "anything short of a fairly general withdrawal of deposits" could be prevented.

On the 28th, Hoover also made a second appeal to the Federal Reserve Board. "Although the Board is not the technical adviser of the President," he conceded, "yet it appears to me that in the large sense it should be prepared to advise me as to the measures necessary . . . in times of emergency." Would the board look favorably on some form of federal guarantee of bank deposits? What about authorizing clearing houses in the currency-short areas to issue special scrip? Or was the board content to "allow the situation to drift along under the sporadic State and community solutions?"[17] This touched off a considerable debate in the board, but its formal reply, not delivered until March 2, was that the Federal Reserve did not endorse either deposit guarantees or clearing house scrip. The board seemed a little pained at Hoover's suggestion that it was allowing the situation to "drift along": it had considered "all sorts of proposals and possibilities" but had not found any it felt justified in recommending.[18]

Stalemate

Thursday, March 2, was a day of rapid acceleration toward the climax. Bank withdrawals and bank failures had increased enormously

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 362-63.

since the beginning of the week. Several additional states had declared banking holidays. In New York, President-elect Roosevelt was preparing to leave for Washington when word came that Attorney General-designate Walsh had died unexpectedly. A quick substitution was arranged. Homer S. Cummings of Connecticut, a party figure since the Wilson era, who had been slated for Governor General of the Philippines, was moved up to fill the vacancy.

In Washington, President Hoover now felt it imperative that something be done, but, obsessed with his own political weakness, he would take no action unless assured of the support of other authorities. One of the possibilities was to push through Congress a measure guaranteeing the security of bank deposits, in hope that it would encourage people to leave their money in the banks. A suitable vehicle, the Glass banking bill, had passed the Senate and was available in the House committee. If there were general agreement, a deposit guarantee provision might be added in the House and accepted by the Senate in conference and the whole bill put on the President's desk in a matter of hours. Senators Glass and Robinson were called to the White House. They were favorably inclined but unwilling to go ahead without Roosevelt's approval, and it was their impression that he was opposed to the deposit guarantee idea. They undertook to check with him when he arrived in Washington that evening.

Late in the afternoon, one of the members of the Federal Reserve Board reported to Hoover that the board was reconsidering its noncommittal statement of that morning. There would be another meeting that evening and more positive action might be approved. What did the President think of using the powers of the Trading with the Enemy Act to declare a national banking holiday? Hoover consulted his Attorney General, who again expressed doubt on legal grounds. Finally, Hoover said that if the board would go on record as so advising him, and if Roosevelt's approval could be secured, he would exercise the war powers to restrict bank withdrawals and trading in gold, but he thought it unnecessary to close the banks.[19] The board met, considered the matter, and decided that the more drastic bank holiday was desirable. Without reporting back to Hoover, Secretary Mills and Eugene Meyer, governor of the Federal Reserve, got in touch with Woodin. Would Roosevelt approve the issue of such a proclamation?

Roosevelt had now arrived at the Mayflower, and Glass, Garner, Rob-

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 363-65.

inson, and other Democratic leaders were summoned. Garner and some of the others were for a bank deposit insurance or guarantee scheme, but Roosevelt did not think it would work. Glass was opposed to closing the banks, thinking the proposed action quite illegal. Roosevelt asserted that he had been advised to the contrary, and that he would declare the banking holiday if necessary after he was sworn in. However, he did not want to make a statement before inauguration. If Hoover wanted to close the banks he could do so on his own authority; he was, after all, still the President.

Woodin reported this to Mills, who let Hoover know what had been happening. Apparently chagrined at the discussion without his knowledge, Hoover insisted that word be conveyed to Roosevelt immediately that what had been discussed was not the administration's proposal. If Roosevelt would grant some assurance that the new administration and Congress would not repudiate the action, he would issue a proclamation to control hoarding and exchange, but there was no need to close the banks. This was duly reported to Roosevelt through Woodin, but the answer was the same: Roosevelt would make no commitment.[20] Hoover had finally made a specific proposal for joint action, but it was too late.

Impending Doom

Friday, March 3, was even more nerve-racking than the day before. During the night, banking holidays had been declared in several more states. These closings, with some emergency measures that had been taken in the major banking cities, gave Hoover hope that the remaining banks would be able to keep going through Saturday noon. After that, Roosevelt would be President and would have the weekend to do something before opening time on Monday. But as the reports of the day's banking transactions began to come in during the afternoon, it became clear that the downward slide was out of control. The big New York and Chicago banks were about at the end of their rope.

At four o'clock that afternoon, President-elect and Mrs. Roosevelt went to the White House for the social visit to the President and his wife customarily made by the incoming couple on inauguration eve.[21] Hoover had Secretary Mills and Eugene Meyer standing by and opened a discussion of the banking situation as soon as the formalities were over.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 365; Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[21] Misunderstanding over the social protocol added to the ill-feeling between Hoover

The positions were much the same as the night before. Meyer urged a national bank holiday proclamation. Hoover opposed it as unnecessary and possibly illegal. He was, however, willing to issue a proclamation limiting bank withdrawals, foreign exchange, and gold transactions if Roosevelt would concur; without Roosevelt's endorsement he felt the risk of congressional repudiation of the order would be too great. Roosevelt said he was satisfied that the Trading with the Enemy Act was still available as authority, even for closing the banks, but it was up to Hoover to decide. If Hoover issued a proclamation, the new administration would be sympathetic, but he would take no formal position. The meeting broke up and the President-elect's party returned to the hotel to await Hoover's decision.[22]

That evening there were further conferences between Roosevelt, Woodin, Glass, Jesse Jones, Moley, and others, interrupted by frequent calls from New York and the Treasury Department with new information about the banking situation. At least twice, President Hoover spoke to Roosevelt by telephone. Accounts differ as to the exact content of these exchanges. Moley's impression was that Hoover's final word was

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and Roosevelt. According to Ike Hoover, the veteran White House chief usher, President Hoover seemed oblivious to the expectation that he would in some way receive the President-elect. (He did, after all, have other things on his mind!) Only after the Roosevelts discreetly inquired through the social staff if they were expected, and the usher put the question to Hoover, did Hoover send word through the same channel that the Roosevelts would be welcome (Irwin Hood Hoover, *Forty-Two Years in the White House,* 1934, p. 227). Ike Hoover seems in error, however, in stating that the social visit was a substitute for the dinner the retiring President was expected to give for his successor on inauguration eve. That may have been the custom when the incoming and outgoing men were both of the same party, but both Taft and Wilson confined themselves to receiving their successors and their families for afternoon tea on inauguration eve.

There are other reports of an embarrassing incident, which infuriated Roosevelt, at the close of this White House visit. Perhaps recalling that in 1913 President and Mrs. Taft had called upon the Wilsons at their hotel after the White House affair, Roosevelt said: "I realize, Mr. President, that you are extremely busy so I will understand completely if you do not return the call." Hoover responded with: "Mr. Roosevelt, when you are in Washington as long as I have been, you will learn that the President of the United States calls on nobody." Grace Tully, *F.D.R.: My Boss* (1949), p. 64. *Cf.* a slightly different version in James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, *Affectionately, F.D.R.* (1959), pp. 250-52.

[22] This account follows that of Moley, *op. cit.,* pp. 145-46, which on the whole seems reliable. *Cf.* Myers and Newton, *op. cit.,* pp. 365-66, and Hoover, *Memoirs,* Vol. 3, p. 213. The main difference between these sources is that Moley stresses Roosevelt's assurance to Hoover that he believed the proposed proclamation to be legal and would be sympathetic if Hoover decided to issue it on his own authority. The Hoover sources indicate that Roosevelt was completely uncooperative, leaving Hoover with the impression that he probably opposed the action.

that he "had decided to do nothing."[23] The Hoover account is that Roosevelt eventually said he "did not want any kind of proclamation issued."[24] At any rate, Roosevelt remained unwilling to approve a Hoover proclamation, and Hoover remained unwilling to proceed alone.

It was after one o'clock when Woodin and Moley, too excited to sleep, walked to the Treasury Department. They found Secretary Mills, Undersecretary Ballantine, Comptroller of Currency Floyd G. Awalt, Eugene Meyer, and several others going over the day's banking reports. Since there would be no nationwide bank holiday declaration, they were making long distance calls to the governors of the states where the banks were still open, recommending that they close the banks temporarily by state authority. The main obstacle was New York, where the bankers thought they could hold out a while longer and Roosevelt's successor, Governor Herbert Lehman, was going along with them. Woodin added his voice to the discussion. Lehman, after telephoning Roosevelt, agreed to issue the necessary proclamation. Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and other major banking states soon fell into line. The next morning most of the banks in the country were either closed or operating under severe restrictions by state authority.[25]

". . . *THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF.*"

The next morning Roosevelt and his party attended the special services he had asked to have arranged at St. John's church on Lafayette Square. Then he was driven to the White House, where Hoover, in a gesture of consideration, joined him under the portico. On the way to the Capitol he acknowledged the cheers while Hoover sat grim and silent beside him. Roosevelt waited while Hoover signed the last-minute bills —except for the Independent Offices appropriation, which he pocket vetoed because Congress had not cut the veterans benefits as he had recommended. There was another wait while Hoover attended the swearing-in of the Vice President in the Senate chamber.

[23] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

[24] Myers and Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

[25] Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48. Essentially the same group was to gather around the Secretary's desk for the next several days and nights. As Moley said, they ". . . had forgotten to be Republicans or Democrats." They were "just a bunch of men trying to save the banking system."

Then it was time to go out to the inaugural stand. At 1:06 P.M. Franklin D. Roosevelt took the oath of office as President of the United States. His inaugural address was at once a message of hope and cheer, an expression of indignation at the state into which the nation had been allowed to fall, a preview of policies and measures to be proposed, and a stern call to action. A line from the opening paragraph had special meaning for the millions without jobs or money, and the many more millions desperate more from anxiety than want: ". . . Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—. . . ." Despite the "dark realities of the moment," Roosevelt asserted, there was plenty of real wealth in the country. It was unavailable because the "rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods" had failed in their responsibilities. But now the "money changers" had "fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization"; the way was clear for the restoration of human and social as well as monetary values.

Roosevelt identified several objectives for which he intended soon to recommend measures to Congress and the states. The first task was to put people to work. This could be done "in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself," for natural resources projects. Closely related was a need to raise the price of agricultural products and to redistribute the "overbalance of population" in industrial centers. Other measures were necessary to forestall mortgage foreclosures on homes and farms, reduce the cost of government, unify "scattered, uneconomical, and unequal" relief activities, and undertake national planning and supervision of transportation, communication, and other utilities. Especially important were "strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments" and "provision for an adequate but sound currency." In carrying out these programs, there would be attention to "making income balance outgo." Roosevelt reaffirmed the principle for which Moley and his other advisers had battled: "Our international trade relations, though vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy." Nevertheless, in foreign affairs generally he "would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor."

Turning from specific measures, Roosevelt called for national dedication and discipline. Because the Constitution was "so simple and practical," it was possible "to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form." He hoped that the "normal balance of Executive and legislative authority" would be adequate, but it was possible that the emergency would require "temporary departure." He would recommend measures to meet the emergency and

welcome "such other measures as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom." But if Congress should fail and the situation were still critical, he would not evade the clear course of duty. "I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe." In closing he said:

> We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.[26]

The heartening words and the confident delivery were what the nation wanted to hear. Some listeners, including even Eleanor Roosevelt, were a little disturbed at the heartiness with which the crowd applauded the suggestion of extraordinary presidential powers, but all over the country people sat down to write letters to their new leader. Probably never before or since has an inaugural address had such an impact.

The address was only the beginning of a strenuous day. After the ceremony, the Hoovers escaped to New York to begin the rest they had been denied for the previous weeks. The new President, his numerous family, and personal guests arrived at the White House. At Mrs. Roosevelt's suggestion, hot dogs—quick and easy on a hectic day, suitably frugal for a nation in hard times, and yet festive in the American tradition—were ready for lunch. After lunch there was an inaugural parade. Roosevelt had fended off suggestions that the parade and other festivities were inappropriate under the circumstances. He wanted to dramatize the fact that a new era was beginning. Besides, he enjoyed parades and had spent a lot of time with Admiral Grayson planning this one; he had no intention of giving it up.[27]

The cabinet nominations were officially submitted to the Senate and confirmed early in the afternoon.[28] After the parade, Roosevelt gathered

[26] Samuel I. Rosenman, *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Vol. 2 (1938), pp. 11-16. Cited hereafter as *Roosevelt Public Papers.*

[27] Lindley, *op. cit.,* p. 81.

[28] The only cabinet nomination receiving any discussion at all was Woodin's. Some members, recalling various agitations over Mellon's alleged conflicts of interests, inquired about Woodin's business interests. The Senate was satisfied however, with the reports of the senators from New York that Woodin was a man of impeccable reputation, and a report by Glass that he had been assured personally by Woodin that the latter was divesting himself of any holdings that might embarrass him. *Congressional Record,* Vol. 77, Pt. 1, 73 Cong. 1 sess., pp. 6-33.

the ten around him in the second-floor study at the White House and had them sworn in together. Thus the formal transfer of power was begun.

". . . *ACTION, AND ACTION NOW.*"

The day after inauguration was Sunday—no time to rest, but at least a welcome day for settling in and planning. Roosevelt later recalled, and his friends recorded, a curious incident of that morning. After breakfast, he wanted to go to his new office. A valet wheeled him down and left him behind the huge desk; no one else knew he was there. The room was silent and empty. The walls were bare, the desk top stripped to its clean blotter and empty trays. The drawers had been cleaned out; there was not so much as a piece of paper within reach. He looked for buttons to push but could not find them. For a few moments he sat there, immobile, surrounded by silence, conscious of urgent things to be done but feeling cut off and helpless, as if encased in a vacuum. Finally, he simply shouted. That broke the spell. Aides came running. The Presidency came alive.[29]

Hoover's aides were gone and Roosevelt's own staff was already in place. No shock here: Howe, Early, MacIntyre, Missy LeHand, and miscellaneous assistants and secretaries had come from New York to continue familiar relationships and largely familiar duties in a new setting. It was not a staff to assist the President in policy matters; that sort of help would have to come from elsewhere. But it served Roosevelt's personal needs comfortably and made up in congeniality what it might have lacked in office-management efficiency. Executive Clerk Rudolph Forster and his small staff remained on hand to process the official papers and instruct the newcomers in what there was of White House routine. (To Forster, this was just another President; he had been watching them come and go since McKinley.)

Elsewhere around the town that Sunday morning, new department heads took advantage of the quiet to explore unfamiliar offices. Most of them had been in the city for several days, conferring with their predecessors; the sense of emergency had dissipated much of the usual restraint about such matters. The activity was most intense at the Treasury, where

[29] Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt*, pp. 270-71; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1958), pp. 2-3.

the same group of old and new officials who had been at the death watch the night of March 3 continued to perspire over the banking system; the only thing changed was that Woodin now sat behind the big desk, Mills in front of it. The following day there were ceremonies in the various departments. A diplomat's diary indicates that even in a time of crisis the traditional courtesies were observed at the State Department:

> The Secretary did not receive the Department until afternoon as he was . . . at the Capitol. The names of Phillips, as Under Secretary, Carr and Moley as Assistant Secretaries, were sent up to the Senate during the morning and were promptly confirmed. Mr. Stimson came down at half-past three and received the Secretary's flag which we gave him. The entire personnel of the Department then lined up in the corridors, some six hundred strong, and filed by, Mr. Stimson presenting the Chiefs of Division, who in turn presented members of their staffs [to Hull]. . . .[30]

There was a similar if not so exclusive ceremony at the Interior Department, where Harold Ickes shook hands with all 2,500 members of the departmental staff.[31] No doubt much the same thing happened elsewhere.

Saving the Banks

Roosevelt called the cabinet for its first meeting on Sunday afternoon, the day after inauguration. When they had assembled he inquired if the Attorney General was ready to advise whether it would be legal to order a temporary closing of all the nation's banks. Homer Cummings, who had been studying the file on this subject since his hasty selection three days before, solemnly affirmed that he was ready to rule and that such an order would be legal. When could Woodin be ready with an emergency banking bill? Possibly in four days—Thursday, March 9. That settled it. A proclamation summoning Congress for the 9th was prepared and issued that evening.[32] Woodin and the Treasury staff already had been working on drafts of bank-closing orders, and at one o'clock in the

[30] Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (1956), p. 89.

[31] Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The First Thousand Days* (1953), p. 3. Ickes recorded that he began this ordeal at four o'clock, but failed to note when he finished.

[32] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 17. In the confusion of the previous three days, Hoover's offer to call the Congress had never been taken up.

morning a proclamation was issued closing all banks through the 9th.[33]

But this only bought time.[34] The question was how to get the banks, or at least the solvent ones, open again and prevent the gold and currency from draining out of them, as had been occurring the previous week. At the Treasury there were conferences from early morning to late at night between Woodin and Moley, Mills and his principal lieutenants (whose departure at that moment was unthinkable), officials of the Federal Reserve, Glass and other legislative leaders, and miscellaneous bankers and experts summoned for the occasion. The tension was almost unbearable. The conferees snapped and shouted at each other; some stormed out and did not return; others collapsed from exhaustion and anxiety. But the gentle Woodin kept his head and listened carefully to the technical advice of Mills and the Treasury men. By Tuesday morning he had grasped the elements of the problem, determined the main lines of action, and cleared the plan with Roosevelt. With the aid of Treasury and Federal Reserve experts, a bill was drafted, explained to the legislative leaders, and ready for consideration when Congress met on Thursday noon.

The bill had several provisions. It began by confirming the actions Roosevelt had taken under the Trading with the Enemy Act and broadening his powers under that act. Currency was to be pumped back into the system by printing special Federal Reserve Bank Notes, to be issued to banks against the value of their assets. Banks were to be reopened by license of the Treasury: sound banks would be licensed immediately; shaky banks would be reopened for restricted operations under conservators; completely insolvent banks would remain closed. The R.F.C. was authorized to extend loans to banks under even more generous terms than before, and to put new capital into the banking system by buying preferred stock in appropriate cases.

The response of Congress was almost unprecedented. As soon as the

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26. The effect, of course, was to superimpose a national rule on the state holidays already in effect, which had various expiration dates, and guarantee that none of the banks would open before the 9th.

[34] It might be noted here in passing that some time previously, FDR, fresh from being a governor and possessing vague ideas about a cooperative federal-state attack on the depression, had invited the nation's governors to meet with him in Washington on the first regular business day of the administration, Monday, March 6. Amidst the excitement of the days just before inauguration, nothing was done in preparation for this meeting, and when the governors arrived Roosevelt could only talk vaguely of future plans and request their cooperation. The governors dutifully passed resolutions of cooperation and went home. *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 18-24.

houses got organized, a presidential message with the draft bill attached was presented. An hour later, although the printed copies had not arrived and most members had not seen the bill, it was shouted through the House. In the Senate there was a brief delay while Huey Long said a few words on behalf of the little banks "at the forks of the creeks," but after three hours of debate, the bill passed a roll call, 73-7. That evening the President signed the bill and issued another proclamation extending the holiday to allow time for the new notes to be printed and the Treasury to sort out the solvent from the insolvent banks.[35]

For the next few days the Treasury men worked around the clock on arrangements for re-examining the banks, to see which ones could open. Woodin had to make life or death decisions about many large institutions. On Sunday evening, March 12, just a week after he had closed the banks, the President made the first of the radio speeches that were to become known as "fireside chats." In simple language he explained what had gone wrong with the banks and what had been done. He announced that the solvent banks would open in stages, beginning the following morning. The insolvent ones would be kept closed; those that reopened would be safe.[36]

The plan worked. During the next week there was heartbreak in many communities, as many banks were judged insolvent and kept closed, but those that reopened stayed open. Gold and currency came out of hoarding and back into the banks; the people had confidence. During the week a refinancing operation that had been giving the Treasury men nightmares went smoothly; the public credit was intact. The R.F.C., under the direction of Jesse Jones, began putting new capital into the banks. The banking crisis was over. The public seemed to feel that the depression had hit bottom, and from then on things could only get better, not worse.

Later, there were some who regretted that Roosevelt had not seized this moment when the banks and the bankers were at his feet to bring about basic reorganization and reform of the banking system. Actually, however, none of the groups situated to influence action—Roosevelt and his key associates (mostly Woodin and Moley), Mills and the Treasury staff, the bankers, Glass and the other legislative leaders—were seriously interested in fundamental change at that time. The Roosevelt group had

[35] The act is Public Law 1, 48 Stat. 1 (1933). For FDR's supplementary proclamation, and an explanatory note, see *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 46-48.

[36] *Ibid.,* pp. 61-65.

no advance plan for reform, and in the crisis had to rely largely on the men they found at the Treasury. All seemed to assume that preserving the banking system was essential to preserving the economy and the national welfare. The key participants had sufficiently similar approaches that once the problem of presidential responsibility was resolved, partisan differences were subdued and the range of alternatives proposed seemed reasonable to all. In the end, it was largely the Treasury's program that was adopted by FDR.[37] Thus, as Moley said, "capitalism was saved in eight days."[38]

Economy and Beer

The Roosevelt emergency program did not consist of banking measures alone. As if concerned to disprove Hoover's charge that the new administration would engage in wild spending and ruin the public credit, the President pushed forward with a proposal that went far toward redeeming his earlier commitment to economy and budget balancing. As soon as he had signed the banking bill on March 9, Roosevelt revealed a plan, based on the studies of Lewis Douglas, to cut over a half billion dollars in expenditures under appropriations already made for the current and next fiscal years. The following morning he sent Congress a message, which in its expressions of financial conservatism, could hardly have been outdone by Hoover.[39] As explained in the message and draft bills that followed, the plan provided for reclassification of veterans benefits and a major reduction in payments; this would save over $400,000. The plan also called for a flat cut in congressional salaries and a cut of executive branch salaries related to the decline in the cost of living; these cuts would save over $100 million.

This was a jolt for which Congress was unprepared, and there was a flurry of objections, from both Republicans and Democrats. The House Democratic leadership was divided and a party caucus ended in discord. However, the bill was taken to the floor the following day, and by adroit maneuvering a parlimentary situation was set up in which amendments

[37] Ballantine, *op. cit.*, p. 142; Schlesinger, *Coming of the New Deal*, p. 5.
[38] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[39] Roosevelt asserted that the continuing deficit had contributed to the banking collapse and continuing stagnation of the economy. Preservation of the public credit was related to the "fundamental human values," because: "Too often in recent history liberal governments have been wrecked on the rocks of loose fiscal policy." *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 49-51.

became impossible. By blunt warnings against crossing the new President, the supporters of the bill whipped into line many of the Democrats who had objected in caucus. Most of the Republicans now also supported the bill, and it passed the House by a substantial margin on Saturday, March 11, the day after Roosevelt proposed it.[40]

Over the weekend the veterans lobby roared into action, and prospects were for a bitter fight in the Senate on Monday. On Sunday evening Roosevelt had—or pretended to those around him to have—a sudden inspiration: "I think this is a good time for beer." The next morning he sent Congress a message, taken almost verbatim from the Democratic platform, recommending amendment of the Volstead Act to permit light beer and wine. Mellowed by the prospect of beer, and impressed by the public response to Roosevelt's Sunday evening fireside chat on the banking crisis, the Senate rallied to his support.[41] As the banks were reopening and meeting the crucial test of public confidence, the economy bill—entitled, significantly, an "Act to Maintain the Credit of the United States Government"—was going through the Senate. Both the economy act and the beer act were back on the President's desk for signature in a few days.[42]

Leader of the People

Roosevelt himself contributed substantially to the passage of these measures and the simultaneous leap in public morale by his skillful and successful communication with the American people. The effectiveness of his two direct messages to the public, the inaugural address and the first fireside chat, have already been mentioned. At the same time he began communicating with the public through the press in a way that was remarkable both for the inherent skill displayed and for the contrast with the press relations of his predecessor. Hoover had continued the practice, begun by Harding and maintained by Coolidge, of answering at his press conferences only written questions submitted in advance; as the depression deepened, he had become increasingly stiff and defensive and

[40] E. Pendleton Herring, "First Session of the Seventy-Third Congress," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 28 (February 1934), pp. 70-72.

[41] "The public demand for economy was excelled only by its thirst for beer. The pressure on the Senate for early action was more than that dilatory body could withstand." *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[42] Schlesinger, *Coming of the New Deal*, pp. 8-12; Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-91.

his conferences less frequent. Obvious and mutual dislike between Hoover and the reporters probably assisted in the "hate Hoover" trend of public opinion.

Roosevelt had enjoyed good press relations at Albany and during the campaign. On March 8, the day before Congress convened (the timing, one presumes, was not accidental), he called the White House correspondents to his office and opened a new regime in press conferences. Although he said that he had been warned that it would not work, he had decided that for the time being it would not be necessary to submit questions in advance. He warned the reporters that there would be many questions that he could or would not answer, and laid down other rules of the game. In "straight news" from the White House he did not want to be quoted directly except by special permission or from written releases by his press secretary. He also distinguished between "background information," which reporters could use on their own authority but not attribute to the White House, and "off the record" material, which was for the reporters' information only and not to be written or repeated elsewhere. Then he engaged in a remarkably candid give-and-take about the banking situation as he saw it, the legislative program to be submitted, and other matters. From this and successive press conferences, the reporters conveyed to the public an impression of a resourceful, cheerful, confident leader.[43]

Thus, the first two weeks of the new administration saw remarkable accomplishments. The financial panic was stopped, public confidence was restored, and steps were taken to redeem some major campaign pledges. Roosevelt's command of public support and the machinery of government was assured. But Roosevelt recognized the essentially conservative nature of his first acts—conservative both in the sense of preserving traditional institutions and in the sense of compliance with the "conventional wisdom" of political economy, even though the implica-

[43] For the transcript of the first press conference, some FDR direct comments on press relations, and extended quotations from an article by Hoover's former press secretary commenting favorably on FDR's use of the press, see *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 30-45. It is generally conceded that Roosevelt was extremely confident of his ability to handle the press successfully and enjoyed his rounds with the reporters. (Schlesinger, *Coming of the New Deal,* pp. 560-63). However, it was not as easy as it looked. James F. Byrnes, who was present at the first press conference, testifies: "When the newsmen were gone, he asked what I thought about it. His hand was trembling and he was wet with perspiration. I answered that it was fine for the reporters, but I feared the effect on him. He said he recognized the hazards. . . . But I saw he liked the conference and found it immensely stimulating." *All in One Lifetime* (1958), p. 74.

tions of the deflationary economy act were not yet as clear as they were to become in Keynes-illuminated hindsight. On March 15, he said in his press conference: "Entirely just for background, the general thought has been this: that even if we can get through the three measures—banking economics, the economy bill, and the beer bill—we still shall have done nothing on the constructive side, unless you consider the beer bill partially constructive." He went on to tell reporters of plans to put men to work in the national forests and to raise farm prices.[44] The New Dealers were soon to have their innings.

[44] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 67-72.

CHAPTER 26

THE HUNDRED DAYS

The swift approval by Congress of Roosevelt's emergency banking and economy-in-government proposals seemed to meet the most urgent needs of the moment, with the beer act added for good measure. At that point some advisers told FDR that Congress ought to be adjourned while the administration put its house in order. A second special session could be called later in the year to handle the rest of the legislative program. But now that Congress was on hand, Roosevelt was reluctant to delay consideration of the legislation that was badly needed in many fields. Sensing the overwhelming public approval for what had been done and the momentum that had been built up in his relations with Congress, he decided to press ahead. The congressional leaders accepted the decision without protest. The result was the famous hundred-day session, which produced more far-reaching legislation than any comparable period in American history and established Roosevelt as a national leader of great distinction.

Keeping Congress in session left little time for perfecting the presidential program and reaching the usual preliminary understandings with legislators, but otherwise the situation was highly favorable to Roosevelt. The new Congress was under solid Democratic control, 312 to 123 in the House and 59 to 37 in the Senate. Having ridden into office on the Roosevelt landslide, many new Democrats were responsive to his suggestions and not yet fixed in the patterns of congressional behavior that ordinarily frustrate presidential leadership. Nor would support for the

President come only from Democrats. Many of the remaining Republicans, especially in the Senate, were sympathetic to the new administration. Roosevelt made the most of this by conferring with the progressive Republicans, promising them patronage, and doing his best to attach them firmly to his cause. For the moment he seemed almost above party, the leader of all the people.

Roosevelt's relations with the leaders of Congress were good. Garner's switch from Speaker to Vice President had provided an occasion for a shakeup of the Democratic leadership of the House. The changes, which resembled in many ways the peaceful revolution in the Senate on the eve of Wilson's inauguration, were intended to make the leadership more progressive and more responsive to the rank and file. A coalition of northern and western Democrats defeated the Deep South's candidate for Speaker, John McDuffie of Alabama, and elected Homer T. Rainey of Illinois.[1] The new leaders replaced the previous moribund Democratic policy committee with a nineteen-man steering committee, representative of all sections; an efficient whip organization was established parallel to the steering committee. Roosevelt took no visible part in the new arrangements, but they had the result of strengthening his influence in the House. The power of the old oligarchy had been broken, but the new steering committee soon proved too unwieldy to be an independent source of party policy. Rainey and his associates devoted themselves to carrying out the President's wishes and did not hesitate to exercise iron-clad control of special rules and House procedure to achieve their ends.[2]

The Senate, with its narrower Democratic majority and tradition of independence for individual members, obviously would not be so accommodating as the House, but the outlook was favorable for legislative accomplishment. Roosevelt realized from the beginning that Garner and the President *pro tem,* Key Pittman of Nevada, would have to be handled gingerly, but Majority Leader Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas was willing and responsive. Several able senators of lower rank, such as James Byrnes of South Carolina, were prepared to give especially close support.

[1] "Discontent had been expressed with the alleged disproportionate influence of southern members, and in the last congress concessions were made to Tammany in committee assignments. Speaker Garner, it was thought, had not consulted the Democratic membership, and dissatisfaction with his policy strengthened the opposition to McDuffie." E. Pendleton Herring, "First Session of the Seventy-Third Congress," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 28 (February 1934), p. 68.

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 69-70.

Both the Senate and the House were in a mood for action. As the session opened, the danger of conservative obstruction seemed less than the danger that Huey Long and others on the radical fringe would snatch the leadership and embark on ventures that would be, from the administration's viewpoint, dangerous and impractical.

It is impossible to discuss in detail either the tactics or the substance of all the important legislation of the session, but the origins of several of the principal measures will serve to illustrate the forces at work, the problems of presidential leadership, the techniques Roosevelt used, and the changing nature of the political situation during the session. The truth is far more complex than the common historical myth of the "dictatorial" President and the "rubber stamp" Congress.

MONEY FOR THE FARMERS

In the first week of the new administration, as Woodin groped for a formula for reopening the banks, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace and his principal associate, Assistant Secretary Tugwell, tackled the problem of helping the debt-ridden American farmer. Their previous proposal, the so-called "domestic allotment plan," had failed of enactment in the lame duck Congress. Now, in a special memorandum to the President, they reviewed the situation and urged a new attempt to get legislation before the spring planting season. On March 8, the day before Congress convened, Roosevelt gave his approval.

Wallace summoned experts and leaders of the main farmers' organizations to a conference on Saturday, March 11. The conferees agreed on the need for quick action. Furthermore, an idea now was presented for avoiding the quarreling among commodity interests and advocates of various "plans" for agriculture that had blocked the previous bill. Congress had just passed the banking bill and seemed about to pass the economy bill, both conferring extraordinary discretion on the executive branch. If Congress was in a mood for such broad delegations, perhaps the way to get started quickly was to present an omnibus bill incorporating several different approaches to the farm problem and authorizing the administration to reconcile the differences and develop a specific program. "Well, we can try," said FDR, when this idea was presented to him on Monday morning.[3]

[3] Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), p. 275.

An Omnibus Bill

Then began a scramble to write a bill that would "legalize almost anything anybody could think up."[4] The draftsmen included Wallace and Tugwell; Jerome Frank, an erudite young lawyer they had just brought into the Department of Agriculture; Mordecai Ezekiel, a top agricultural economist from the department's staff; and several experts and lawyers representing various shades of old and new thought about farm problems, loaned by the farm organizations and other sources. On Thursday, March 16, the draft bill was finished and sent to Congress with a message from Roosevelt frankly admitting that it marked a "new and untrod path" but urging prompt enactment in view of the "unprecedented condition" of agriculture.[5]

The core of the new bill was a modified version of the domestic allotment plan, now identified as "agricultural adjustment." In exchange for voluntary agreements by farmers to reduce production of crops already in surplus, the Secretary was authorized to pay cash bounties; the money was to come from special taxes on agricultural processors. The added attractions included authority to subsidize the export of surpluses, based on the familiar McNary-Haugen plan of the previous decade; to lease land and take it out of production; to issue licenses and make various kinds of agreements with processors and producers' organizations; to support prices by making loans on crops in storage; and several other schemes. "For another quarter-century, agricultural policy came up with very little which was not provided for one way or another in the Agricultural Adjustment Act," notes Schlesinger.[6] From this array of alternatives, the Secretary of Agriculture was to have great freedom to shape a program and an organization to carry it out.

This was a big dose for Congress to swallow in a hurry. The key idea had originated with the advanced thinkers on agricultural subjects and was not well understood on the farm or in Congress. The leaders of the farm organizations supported the bill (or various leaders supported various parts of the bill), but agricultural thought was traditionally hostile to production limitations. The processors were suspicious of the regula-

[4] Russell Lord, *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947), p. 330.

[5] Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Vol. 2 (1938), p. 74. (Cited hereafter as *Roosevelt Public Papers*); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), pp. 38-39.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 39.

tory powers conferred on the Secretary. The whole thing seemed a complicated and roundabout way to raise farm prices. It also did not cover an increasingly acute and specific problem being felt that spring in the farm belt, the loss of farms through mortgage foreclosures.

But despite the grumbling, the House responded after Roosevelt called the leaders to the White House and calmed them down. The bill was driven through under a tight rule only six days after it had been introduced. But the Senate was not to be stampeded; the committee on agriculture took the bill under consideration and began hearings.

To Save The Homesteads

The administration now moved rapidly to bring forward other measures to meet the farm mortgage problem. On March 27, Roosevelt announced a reorganization plan to consolidate several feeble agricultural credit programs into a new, independent Farm Credit Administration, under the direction of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.[7] On April 3, he formally requested legislation authorizing the new agency to pump new money into the farm mortgage market, arrange for refinancing of mortgages at low interest rates, and take other measures to prevent further foreclosures.[8]

The credit proposals neutralized some of the discontent, but many congressmen remained unsatisfied. "If the President wanted to play around with devices for agricultural adjustment, they were prepared to let him go ahead; but they did not want him to forget that the cheapening of the currency was, as they saw it, the sure way to lighten the dead weight of debt and to redress the unfavorable terms of trade between countryside and city."[9] As the farm bill came on the Senate floor for debate, several inflationary proposals were urged as amendments or substitutes. There were proposals to cut the gold content of the dollar—give out less gold in exchange for paper money, and print more money per ounce of gold in reserve. Western senators wanted to "do something about silver"—buy silver, coin more silver, and print paper money backed by silver. Others simply wanted to print currency and use it to meet government obligations and retire government bonds, without

[7] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 84-90. John M. Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries* (1959), pp. 35-60, discusses Morgenthau's participation in the farm credit and other early agricultural programs.

[8] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 100-02.

[9] Schlesinger, *op. cit.,* p. 41

worrying about metallic reserves. Not since Bryan's day had there been such a flowering of cheap money schemes.

Roosevelt Accepts Inflation

By inauguration day, Roosevelt had become at least receptive to the idea of inducing a moderate amount of "reflation" as a means of raising the price level and taking some of the pressure off debtors. Furthermore, he now realized that the banking and governmental economy measures of his first two weeks would probably have an additional deflationary effect. However, for a few weeks after the banks were reopened, he pursued a cautious monetary policy, fending off demands for inflation and waiting to see what would happen. Officially, the dollar was still on the gold standard even though specie payments had been suspended and hoarding of gold prohibited; these were explained as temporary measures necessary to protect the government's gold reserve. Beginning on April 11, the Treasury cautiously issued a few licenses for export of gold to balance foreign accounts, in the interest of protecting the value of the dollar vis-à-vis foreign currencies.

By mid-April, three things were apparent. First, prices were not rising significantly. Second, heavy demand for licenses to export gold indicated that speculators were converting overseas dollar balances into gold as rapidly as possible; if licenses were granted freely, the Federal Reserve's stock of gold, which theoretically backed the currency, might be seriously depleted. Third, sentiment on the Hill was increasingly favorable to some sort of inflationary program tied into the farm program. Roosevelt was in danger of having his hand forced by Congress, or losing the farm bill altogether, or both.[10]

The matter came to a head on April 17. An amendment to the farm bill calling for remonetization of silver was voted down by only a small margin. Then Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma wrapped up in one amendment several inflationary devices—silver, greenbacks, and devaluation in terms of gold. On the 18th, administration supporters in the Senate told Roosevelt flatly that this one was going to be irresistible. Finally cornered, Roosevelt said he would support the Thomas amendment if it were softened to make the inflationary measures optional with the President rather than mandatory. Thomas agreed.

[10] Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), pp. 114-19.

That evening at the White House, there was a conference on foreign economic affairs that included Secretaries Hull and Woodin, Budget Director Douglas, Moley, State Department economic adviser Herbert Feis, and William Bullitt and James Warburg, both temporarily serving in the State Department. When Roosevelt announced that he was accepting the Thomas amendment, all except Moley, who had been in on the negotiations, were astounded. Woodin and Hull seemed stunned; Douglas, Warburg, and Feis argued vehemently with the President, but he could not be budged. After leaving the White House, Douglas made his famous observation, "Well, this is the end of Western civilization."[11]

The next day Moley began working with a group from the Senate on a modified version of the Thomas amendment, which was soon incorporated into the farm bill. At the same time Roosevelt anticipated the Thomas amendment by announcing that in order to protect the Federal Reserve's gold, and in expectation of raising commodity prices at home, the administration would issue no further licenses to export gold. For the time being, the United States was off the gold standard. The dollar would be allowed to find its own level in terms of foreign currencies.[12]

In Congress the farm bill, now including the agricultural adjustment proposal, the emergency farm mortgage program, and the several inflationary options of the Thomas amendment, came on for final debate. A handful of Republican conservatives thundered on the right, and old Carter Glass made an emotional announcement of his split with the administration on the money issue.[13] But in the West there were ominous riots over mortgage foreclosures, and the radical farmers' holiday movement gathered strength. In Congress the agrarians were having their day; the Senate passed the bill by a margin of 64-20, and Roosevelt signed it on May 12. A new era in both agricultural and monetary policy was beginning.

It took a considerable time, of course, for the agriculture adjustment features of the act to have any effect, but other provisions brought quick results. Armed with new power, the Farm Credit Administration stopped the panic of mortgage foreclosures. And it appeared for a few weeks

[11] Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), pp. 156-61.

[12] FDR press conference, April 19, 1933; Executive Order 6111, April 20, 1933. *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 137-44.

[13] "To me, the suggestion that we may devalue the gold dollar fifty per cent means national repudiation. To me, it means dishonor. In my conception of it, it is immoral." Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, *Carter Glass* (1939), p. 354.

that the inflationists had been right about what the country needed. Shortly after the abandonment of the gold standard, there was a rise in commodity prices and a flurry of buying on the stock exchanges.

RELIEF AND WORK

Only a few days after he presented the farm legislation, and long before Congress had completed action on it, Roosevelt presented bills intended to aid the needy and put some of the unemployed, then estimated as numbering between 12 and 15 millions, back to work. These proposals, which combined several previous lines of policy discussion, reflected the interests and initiative of Roosevelt himself, other members of the administration, several important senators, and outside experts.

The President's personal contribution grew out of his deep interest in natural resources. As a Roosevelt and an eastern progressive, he had long been identified with conservation as a political issue. As a landowner he was interested in ways of saving trees, halting erosion, and restoring worn-out soil to fertility and appropriate use. As an amateur social philosopher, a latter-day Jeffersonian, he was fascinated by schemes to get the depressed masses out of urban congestion and into the country, where they might lead lives of healthy self-sufficiency on their own plots or find employment in small-scale local industry. As a governor, he had fought for public control of water power and sponsored a controversial reforestation program. During the campaign he had spoken of putting unemployed men to work planting trees, clearing brush, building roads, and otherwise improving the national forests and parks. And after election he had announced his plan for a great development of the Tennessee Valley.

These were programs Roosevelt could easily visualize, and about which he had no doubts. Even before inauguration, he had sent Tugwell to talk to the Forest Service about establishing camps for unemployed young men. Now, only ten days after inauguration, he told Moley he had decided to ask immediately for legislation establishing a "civilian reclamation corps." Roosevelt's impatience precipitated decisions elsewhere. Skillful staff work by his associates brought a crystallization around the "reforestation" project of other measures of even greater scope, about which Roosevelt was not at the beginning nearly so enthusiastic.

Programs Under Hoover

Since the beginning of the depression, there had been controversy over the responsibility of the federal government for dealing with unemployment and relief. One question was whether the federal government should provide, or at least finance, direct relief. Another was whether the federal government should initiate a significant expansion of public works in order to stimulate the economy and soak up unemployment. The Hoover administration had been cautious on both issues. Hoover felt, as many Americans did, that "the dole" was inherently shameful; charity really ought to be private, and if government was to be involved at all, it should be state or local government. As to public works, Hoover regarded only a few projects as justifiable on economic grounds, the remainder being "pork barrel." And the overriding necessity of balancing the budget, in Hoover's view, sharply limited the federal government's participation in either relief or public works.

In the summer of 1932, after a prolonged debate, Congress and Hoover had agreed on a program to be administered by the R.F.C. That agency was authorized to lend $300 million to states for relief purposes, at 3 per cent interest, the money to be repaid by deduction from future highway grants. The R.F.C. was also authorized to lend up to $1.5 billion to local governments, for income-producing "construction work of public character." But these programs moved slowly. The R.F.C. was cautious, as befitted a banking agency, and the states and localities where need was greatest were the ones least willing or able to obligate themselves by further borrowing. By the end of 1932, despite the obvious need, only about $80 million of the relief money had been disbursed. Finding and planning revenue-producing construction projects were also slow processes. During the lame duck Congress, such progressive Republican senators as Cutting and LaFollette, and such Democrats as Wagner of New York and Costigan of Colorado, had pressed for a modification of the relief and works programs to put more federal money into circulation, but without success.

New Departures

As he took office, Roosevelt was committed somehow to do more in both of these fields, but except for his plans in the natural resources area, he remained uncertain about how and how much. While he was willing to contemplate it as a necessity, he shared Hoover's distaste for

the idea of large-scale federal relief. He also was hesitant about public works, partly for budget balancing reasons and partly because he was not certain that enough useful projects could be started quickly enough to be effective. However, LaFollette, Costigan, Wagner, and the other congressional activists soon found allies in the administration. They began discussing public works with Tugwell, who had been urging Roosevelt all along to establish a program on the order of $5 billion. They also talked to Secretary of Labor Perkins about the relief problem. She, in turn, was in touch with such professional welfare workers as Harry Hopkins, the New York state relief administrator. For some time, Hopkins had been saying that the only way to get an adequate relief program was to cut out most of the restrictions and give large-scale federal grants—not loans—to state and local relief organizations.

Moley had been following these exploratory discussions in a general way, and when Roosevelt announced his determination to go ahead with the civilian reclamation program (later it became the Civilian Conservation Corps), he saw the obvious relationship. He got FDR's permission to delay long enough to draw up a memorandum on the CCC and refer it to an informal committee of the cabinet members most concerned. The committee seized the opportunity and advised Roosevelt that the CCC was a fine idea but amounted to only a third of an adequate program on unemployment; also needed were grants for relief and public works. White House discussions involving Perkins, Hopkins, and the interested senators soon followed. Roosevelt finally accepted the argument that the three subjects were linked, and on March 21 he sent a message to Congress requesting the three-pronged program.[14]

Legislation and Action

When the proposal to set up the Civilian Conservation Corps was publicly unveiled, the instinctive hostility of organized labor to anything smacking of labor conscription and sub-standard wages came to the fore, but Roosevelt pacified the labor leaders by letting it be known that he would appoint a labor man to head the new organization. The bill passed and was signed on March 31, only ten days after Roosevelt had requested it. By the end of July, 300,000 young men, mostly from families on relief, were in the camps and sending home allotments from their modest cash wages.

[14] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 8-84. Moley's story of these developments

The relief bill that was drafted in collaboration between members of the executive branch and several key senators provided for the establishment of a new organization, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, authorized to give $500 million in grants to the states. In Congress there were expressions of outrage from a conservative minority, but the bill passed both houses by large margins and was signed on May 12. A few days later, Roosevelt got Governor Lehman to release Hopkins from his job in New York to head the new agency. Hopkins whipped an organization into shape with almost incredible speed and soon had relief going in most states and localities.[15]

The details of the general public works program took some time to work out, and in the end this measure was handled by Congress as part of an even broader industrial recovery plan, which will be described subsequently. Meanwhile, however, Roosevelt pressed forward with another program to which he gave the same personal interest that had resulted in the CCC. Throughout the 1920's, Republican Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska had fought to retain in public ownership the power facilities built by the government during World War I at Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River. To the Norris plan for public power and fertilizer manufacture, Roosevelt added his own interest in conservation, land use, resources planning, and development of rural industry. On April 10, he requested Congress to authorize the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority, "a corporation clothed with the power of Government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise," to have the "broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory for the general social and economic welfare of the Nation."[16] The national mood was receptive to experimentation, and the venerable Norris was at last an honored figure on Capitol Hill. The bill passed after brief consideration and was signed on May 18.

DISCIPLINING WALL STREET

One of the clearest commitments of the new administration, stemming from both the Democratic platform and Roosevelt's campaign speeches,

[15] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-68.
[16] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 122.

was to put the issuance and marketing of securities under some form of public regulation. The heavy losses suffered by people from all walks of life in the Wall Street crash, followed by exposures of widespread irresponsibility and fraud on the part of promoters, bankers, and brokers, had made such legislation almost a political necessity. The history of the Securities Act of 1933 provides another illustration of the complexities of New Deal leadership. Roosevelt and his associates took the initiative, managed to ride cross-currents of conflicting views among experts, the affected interests, members of Congress, and members of the administration, and stimulated a far-reaching legislative enactment.

Back in December one of the first steps Moley had taken on his assignment to work up legislation for the new Congress was to get in touch with Samuel Untermyer, a New York lawyer who had spent a lifetime battling the abuses of Wall Street. Untermyer responded eagerly and in a short time produced a draft bill to regulate both the issuance of securities and the stock exchanges. The bill had one feature that struck both FDR and Moley as anomalous: it gave the regulatory job to the Post Office Department.[17] Arguments with Untermyer failed to change his mind on this point, and the project was put on the shelf for several weeks.

After inauguration Roosevelt tried another tack and asked the Attorney General and the Secretary of Commerce to investigate the securities regulation problem. They called on Huston Thompson, former chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, and before Moley (who had been working with Untermyer) knew what was going on, Thompson had produced a bill. Unlike the Untermyer draft, the Thompson effort provided only for control of securities issues, not the exchanges; it also put the regulatory activity under the Federal Trade Commission.

In mid-March Roosevelt called Untermyer and Thompson and their respective allies and sponsors to a meeting in his study in hope of getting them together, but the effort failed. Finally, he decided to go ahead on the basis of the Thompson draft. On March 29, he asked Congress for legislation providing that ". . . every issue of new securities to be sold in interstate commerce shall be accompanied by full publicity and information, and that no essentially important element attending the issue shall be concealed from the buying public."[18] The Thompson-

[17] This was not as odd then as it now would seem. Control of securities was a significant extension of federal activity, and tying the function both legally and administratively to the control of the mails would give it a strong presumption of constitutionality.

[18] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 93.

drafted bill incorporating this principle was introduced as the Fletcher bill by the chairman of the appropriate committee of the Senate.

Despite the generally favorable political situation, the bill was not well received. Financial interests naturally saw it as another threat to "confidence." Reformers thought the proposal too mild. More significantly, many competent experts, although agreeing on the essential principle of "full disclosure" thought the bill technically deficient in important respects. Sam Rayburn, chairman of the cognizant committee in the House, told Moley that the bill just wouldn't do. Could the administration produce a substitute?

Moley then agreed to do what he could to get FDR uncommitted from the Fletcher bill. He also agreed to find someone to produce a new bill if Rayburn would assume responsibility for the enterprise; since the administration had sponsored the Fletcher bill, Moley's hand could not be visible. Rayburn agreed to this, and with his approval Moley called on Felix Frankfurter, who was known to have technical competence and a general approach similar to Untermyer's, but who was not wedded to the idea of regulation by the Post Office. Moley also consulted Averell Harriman, who, despite his wealth and family connections with Wall Street, was interested in getting a moderate regulatory scheme.

Frankfurter came to Washington and installed two younger Harvard associates, James M. Landis and Benjamin V. Cohen, to do the actual drafting under his week-end and long-distance supervision. Harriman also produced two New York lawyers with whom they were to consult for the moderate businessman's point of view. The collaboration between Harvard and Wall Street did not work out; the bill that resulted was largely a Frankfurter-Landis-Cohen product. However, Rayburn accepted it and, after some minor adjustments suggested by Harriman and his group, reported it out of his committee without holding hearings.

By this time, Roosevelt was convinced that the House bill was preferable and was willing to have it instead of the one the administration had sponsored in the Senate, if the switch could be made neatly. The administration's strategists in the Senate, majority leader Robinson and James Byrnes, were appealed to, and in conjunction with Rayburn they worked it out. The House and Senate passed their respective bills. A conference committee was appointed. In the conference process the administration's original bill disappeared, and the Senate accepted the

House bill. Pretending not to notice the difference, Roosevelt signed the "Rayburn-Fletcher bill" on May 27.[19]

STABILIZING INDUSTRY

Of all the early New Deal measures, the National Industrial Recovery Act, which Roosevelt signed into law on June 16, 1933, had the broadest scope and most complex roots. In the background was the desperate need for a revival of business and industrial activity. Hoover had mainly relied on building confidence by fiscal and monetary correctness, supplemented by the limited public works and industrial bailing-out financed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Roosevelt was committed to a more direct approach, but he was not certain exactly what it should be. Some of the proposals of his first few weeks, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the relief program, were relevant but did not attack the problem head-on; his economy measures and farm program were likely, in the short run at least, further to disadvantage nonfarm interests. One line of attack frequently discussed was to stimulate the economy by launching large-scale public works, but by mid-April only the TVA proposal had taken shape, and that promised no immediate impact. Development of a general public works program had been held up by the opposition of Lewis Douglas and others within the administration who insisted on giving budget-balancing first priority.

Ideas for a New Order

Another possibility, which excited the minds of many people but was difficult to reduce to specifics, was for the government to undertake a nationwide program, probably in co-operation with business organizations, to stabilize production and employment, stop destructive competition, and bring industry back to life on a sound basis. Such ideas had been in the air for some time. Roosevelt himself, in a campaign speech at San Francisco, had asserted: ". . . The task of Government in its relation to business is to assist in the development of an economic declara-

[19] This account is based primarily on that of Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-83. A bill extending federal regulation to the stock and commodities exchanges followed in 1934. A feature of the 1934 bill was the establishment of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which took over the functions assigned to the FTC under the 1933 act.

tion of rights, an economic constitutional order."[20] In the spring of 1933, economists, business and labor groups, reformers, and promoters of all types were hatching industrial co-operation schemes to be presented to the new administration.[21] For several weeks after March 4, there were occasional discussions of industrial programs within the administration. Memoranda accumulated on Moley's desk, but other matters were pressing, and there was no obvious way to bring it all into focus. But then, as happened so often in this period, other events provided both a spur and an opportunity.

Increasing Pressure

Senator Hugo Black of Alabama had for some time been proposing a federal statute limiting workers in interstate commerce to a thirty-hour week. Although organized labor, traditionally favorable to "sharing the work," was interested, the administration did not at first take the proposal seriously. Then, early in April, the Black bill was passed by the Senate. The outlook was for quick, favorable action by the House. Although sympathetic to the objectives of its sponsors, Roosevelt and Secretary Perkins felt that the bill was probably unwise and certainly too rigid to be workable. Miss Perkins hastily worked out and presented to Congress an alternative scheme that provided flexibility on the matter of hours to accommodate various kinds of industries, and proposed machinery by which the Secretary of Labor, with the aid of advisory boards from industry, might establish minimum wages. This new proposal, and the violent reaction of business to the idea of government

[20] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 1, p. 752. Later in the same speech he amplified: "This implication is, briefly, that the responsible heads of finance and industry instead of acting each for himself, must work together to achieve the common good. They must, where necessary, sacrifice this or that private advantage; and in reciprocal self-denial must seek a general advantage. It is here that formal Government . . . comes in. Whenever in the pursuit of this objective the lone wolf, the unethical competitor, . . . declines to join in achieving an end recognized as being for the public welfare . . . , the Government may properly be asked to apply restraint. Likewise, should the group ever use its collective power contrary to the public welfare, the Government must be swift to enter and protect the public interest." *Ibid.,* pp. 754-55.

[21] Schlesinger, *op. cit.,* p. 94, summarizes: "From diverse sources—from recollections of the war mobilization of fifteen years before, from business hopes for protection of prices and profits, from trade union hopes for protection of labor standards, from liberal hopes for creative national planning, from a collective revulsion against a competitive system which competed at the expense of human decency—opinion was converging on a broad approach to the problem of industrial recovery. With past policies of exhortation and drift discredited, with state socialism undesired and politically excluded, there remained the prospect of a mighty attempt, organized by government, to halt the decline through a massive experiment in national cooperation."

wage-fixing, forced some reconsideration on the Hill and gave the administration a little time. Roosevelt asked Moley to see if labor standards regulation could be tied into one of the business-government cooperation schemes.

At the same time, Roosevelt was under increasing pressure to come out with a big public works program. Without committing himself, he had been letting the argument between Budget Director Douglas and such cabinet members as Ickes, Perkins, and Wallace run its course. Now the demand was increasing in Congress, and there was danger that the administration would find itself embarrassed in this field just as it had been by the thirty-hour bill. Douglas favored the idea of reviving industry through a co-operative plan as an inexpensive alternative to public works. Others thought a complementary public works effort essential to provide the dynamic element, the new business to set the economy in motion so there would be something to cooperate about. At any rate, the conjunction of wages and hours, public works, and industrial recovery became increasingly apparent to the high administration policy makers and their allies in Congress.

Drafting a Bill

In the latter part of April, several more or less separate groups within the administration and on the Hill were trying to pull the threads together and draft legislation. One group of economists and labor experts centered around Senator Wagner. Tugwell, Jerome Frank, Assistant Secretary of Commerce John Dickinson, and later Secretary Perkins, formed another nucleus within the administration. A third focal point was the office of General Hugh S. Johnson, a member of the Brain Trust writing team during the campaign, who was drafted by Moley late in April specifically to work on this subject. Johnson soon drew in Donald Richberg, a Chicago lawyer and prominent advocate of industrial planning.

In late April and early May, Roosevelt began throwing out hints of what was coming in his press conferences, in a speech to the United States Chamber of Commerce, and in his second fireside chat. About May 10, the various proposals and drafts had been boiled down into two main alternatives. Under instructions from Roosevelt to lock themselves in a room until they could find a compromise, the drafters hammered out a bill. Roosevelt sent it to Congress, with a persuasive message, on May 17.

The bill had two main parts. Title I was the plan for cooperation or "partnership" of business and government. Under government supervision, trade associations and other groups could draft codes of fair competition which, when approved by the President, would be enforceable by law. Business cooperation under the codes would be exempt from the antitrust laws. The President was to have broad powers to license businesses, modify or suspend codes, and otherwise regulate the economy in the interest of industrial recovery. The interest of labor was safeguarded by Section 7a, which guaranteed the right of collective bargaining and provided for minimum wages, hours, and working conditions to be established by agreement between workers and employers or by presidential regulation. Title II, despite the fervent opposition of Douglas and other guardians of the budget, would authorize $3.3 billion for public works.

A Historic Step

The House passed the bill quickly, with amendments designed to strengthen protection of labor. In the Senate there was extended debate, which reflected both the concerns of the immediately affected interests and legislative uneasiness about a radical departure from traditional governmental relations with business. While business groups, including both the National Association of Manufacturers and United States Chamber of Commerce, had favored the general idea of business-government cooperation and contributed much to the early drafts of the bill, business now objected to giving guarantees to organized labor. The boomlet in Wall Street and general rise in prices after the abandonment of the gold standard in mid-April also made businessmen a little more optimistic and not nearly so anxious as they had been a few weeks earlier to put themselves under governmental guidance. At the other end of the political spectrum, old-time progressives like Senator Borah were afraid that encouraging industry-wide cooperation without reference to the Sherman Act would open the door to monopolistic abuses. The discussion continued for a month. There were cries of "dictatorship" and numerous amendments in the Senate, but Senator Wagner fought for the bill with determination and skill, and brought it through by a narrow margin with its essential features intact. Roosevelt signed it on June 16, with a statement hailing the achievement and asking the full cooperation of business, labor, and the public: "It is the most important attempt of this kind in history. As in the great crisis of the World War, it puts

a whole people to the simple but vital test: '*Must we go on in many groping, disorganized, separate units to defeat or shall we move as one great team to victory?*' "[22]

CONGRESS ASSERTS ITSELF

In addition to the major measures already described, Congress passed, shortly before adjourning on June 16, several other bills that can be noted briefly. It is important to point out that a considerable change in the climate of legislative-executive relations was occurring toward the end of the session. The resistance encountered in the case of the National Industrial Recovery Act was symptomatic of a general legislative discontent.

To be sure, a few of the session's late bills followed the earlier pattern of executive initiative and prompt, almost overwhelming, legislative approval. For example, the administration took a logical step from its April decision to leave the gold standard and asked for a resolution that would in effect nullify the obligation to pay in gold that was then incorporated in many outstanding government and corporate bonds and other private contracts. This was passed without difficulty and signed by Roosevelt on June 5. Another case was the bill that Roosevelt signed on June 13, establishing the Home Owners Loan Corporation and providing town home owners mortgage relief paralleling what had already been asked for farmers. This measure, it has been said, was ". . . strictly administration in origin and was routed through both houses with very little modification."[23] An emergency railroad act, sponsored by the administration but drawing from background studies made on both the executive and legislative sides, also became law at the end of the session.

Roosevelt Outmaneuvered

But not all of the important legislation of the hundred days originated with the President and his advisers, or even had their blessing. There was, for example, the field of banking, in which reform legislation clearly was long overdue. After the emergency legislation of early

[22] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, p. 256. The preceding account of the origins of the National Industrial Recovery Act has drawn heavily from Schlesinger, *op. cit.,* pp. 87-102; Lindley, *op. cit.,* pp. 148-62; Tugwell, *op. cit.,* pp. 280-86; Moley, *op. cit.,* pp. 184-91.

[23] Lawrence H. Chamberlain, *The President, Congress and Legislation* (1946), p. 304.

March and the reopening of the banks, the administration had no further specific plans and was disposed to put off general legislation until a later session. But Senator Glass, Representative Henry B. Steagall, and other congressmen had been studying banking problems for years; although not in complete agreement about what was needed, they were anxious to move ahead. For several weeks, they received confusing signals from the White House, as meetings ended inconclusively and Roosevelt and Woodin made alternately warm and cool public statements. Early in May, shortly after Glass's great disappointment over Roosevelt's gold policy, he and Steagall decided to proceed regardless of the White House and introduced separate bills in the Senate and the House.

About this time there were sensational revelations from a Senate investigation of Wall Street being handled by counsel Ferdinand Pecora. Although Glass thought the investigation shamefully irresponsible, it had the effect of sharpening the interest of Congress in banking legislation. Another effect was to embarrass and for a time to neutralize the White House, for Pecora turned up the names of Woodin, Norman Davis, and others in or close to the administration among those who had benefited from preferential treatment by the house of Morgan. While the administration wrestled internally with the question whether Woodin should resign, the House and Senate passed their respective banking bills.

In the preliminary discussions, one of the points most at issue had been whether the bill should establish some form of deposit insurance or guarantee system. Although Glass himself was cool toward the subject, he had accepted without too much protest a popular amendment, offered on the floor by Senator Vandenberg, providing for what later became the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Roosevelt also had been dubious from the beginning about deposit insurance, and as the Glass and Steagall bills went to conference, he told Glass that if a bill incorporating the Vandenberg amendment reached him, he would veto it.

Congress was expected to adjourn in less than a week, and Roosevelt's threat, plus remaining differences between the Senate and House bills, seemed to end any hope of passage in that session. However, a controversy over the appropriation for veterans benefits prolonged the session and gave the conferees an extra week. At the last minute the Vandenberg amendment was modified to delay its coming into effect for six months, thus giving Roosevelt a face-saving escape, and the two

houses were reconciled. Observing that "This bill has more lives than a cat," but claiming to be happy about the whole thing, FDR signed it on June 16.

In addition to the deposit insurance plan, the act provided for divorce of commercial and investment banking, gave the Federal Reserve Board power to regulate the use of credit for speculative purposes, modified federal policy toward branch banking, and included provisions to encourage more banks to become members of the Federal Reserve system. Despite the momentary unhappiness of the banking fraternity, many observers thought the act a weak dose for the ills of the system. In time, the administration might well have produced a deeper-cutting reform bill. But Roosevelt and his aides did not have plans laid in advance, and when Congress forced the issue, it was more than the badly overloaded administration could handle. Roosevelt had to take what Congress gave him. In the end, the Glass-Steagall Act stood as the New Deal banking reform measure.[24]

A Fight on Economy

Roosevelt's differences with Congress on the banking legislation were kept sufficiently muted so that in the end it was possible for him to give in with good grace. Not so in the case of the veterans benefit appropriation. A dispute over this bill broke into the open and exposed disagreements between Roosevelt and a number of congressional leaders that could only be compromised awkwardly, leaving ill-feeling on both sides.

The bill at issue was the Independent Offices appropriation for the fiscal year beginning July 1, which Hoover had vetoed at the end of the lame duck session because Congress had not cut the veterans benefits as he had recommended. Shortly after inauguration had come the special economy act, in which Congress, after a momentary hesitation, had authorized FDR to slash the veterans program even deeper than Hoover had proposed. Budget Director Douglas, who was largely responsible for the economy program, worked out the details and did not spare the knife. When he announced the new regulations on March 31, it appeared that the cut came to $480 million, rather than the $385 million estimated earlier.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 324-34; Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-46; Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-39, 442-43.

The veterans lobby was not pacified by Roosevelt's public request that the veterans share the spirit of sacrifice in which every department, agency, and employee of the government was contributing to the great goal of economy. Furthermore, the veterans had some appealing arguments on their side, because when the new regulations were applied to specific cases, it appeared that in addition to trimming services and pensions to individuals to whom the government's obligation was marginal, there would in some cases be deep cuts in pensions to veterans with direct, service-connected injuries. Congressmen began hearing not only from the veterans lobby in Washington but from people back home —individual veterans and communities facing loss of payrolls with the curtailment of Veterans Administration offices and hospitals. A drive to rewrite the still-pending appropriation bill so as to restore some of the cuts, overriding the economy act and Roosevelt's regulations, gathered momentum rapidly.

Roosevelt quickly realized that the administration was in an untenable position. On May 10, after a conference with the national commander of the American Legion, he announced that the cut in compensation had in some cases been "deeper than was originally intended." He promised careful review of the regulations, and also announced that no hospitals would be closed pending a review of needs that would require considerable time.[25] This was not enough. The Senate amended the appropriation bill to limit the pension cut to 25 per cent for all veterans with service-connected disabilities; the House prepared to go even further. Douglas urged Roosevelt to hold the line: veto the appropriation and keep Congress in session all summer if necessary to get a satisfactory bill. But after some tough bargaining sessions with members of the House, Roosevelt issued new regulations on June 6 limiting the pension cuts to 25 per cent for veterans with service-connected disabilities.[26] He also agreed to accept other minor modifications and to leave on the rolls, pending individual review, 154,000 "presumptively" service-connected cases. Threatened with a veto if they went further, the House leaders put the bill through on that basis and planned for adjournment on June 10.

But there was more trouble in the Senate. Led by Senators Frederick Steiwer and Bronson M. Cutting, a coalition of progressive and old

[25] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, p. 168.
[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 218-21.

guard Republicans and Democrats from the South and West adopted an amendment putting the "presumptives" definitely on the rolls. Roosevelt was furious, particularly at Cutting, a progressive Republican and fellow-Grotonian whom he had considered a supporter and whom he had even offered to make Secretary of Interior. He served notice that he would veto the bill if it came to him with the Steiwer-Cutting amendment. June 15 was the day of climax, as a conference report incorporating the amendment was presented to the House. Only the full use of the administration's influence caused its rejection by a narrow margin. In an angry, late-evening session, the Senate receded and reluctantly accepted the House version.[27] Roosevelt signed the bill and Congress adjourned the following day.

Thus, after compromising twice on veterans benefits, FDR took a firm stand and was sustained. But the victory had its price. The unexpected extension of the session enabled the banking bill, which he had hoped to see stalled, to slip through. It also gave additional opportunities for fulmination against the NIRA, which was held up until the last day. And Congress went home in a restless mood, its uneasiness over the unprecedented acts of the session sharpened by resentment at the final show of the administration's power. Clearly, Roosevelt's magic over Congress had its limits as to time and issues.

RIDING THE TIGER

So ended the remarkable hundred days. The breath-taking legislative output was made possible, in large part, by a political situation that was unusually favorable, even for a presidential transition. The great potential influence of a President who has led a party overturn was magnified by the desperate condition of the nation. Both the general public and the more specifically political elements centering in Washington were fearful, confused, and seeking leadership. The barriers that had long frustrated the forces of change and reform were down. On March 4, Roosevelt took the center of the stage with confidence; his first words and deeds were decisive, appropriate, and inspiring. As the banking crisis ended, there were rare opportunities for presidential leadership, and Roosevelt, his long-standing belief in the strong Presidency sharpened by the urgencies of the moment, gladly seized the opportunities.

[27] Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-65.

Preparation and Flexibility

Roosevelt was not well prepared, in the usual sense of the word, when he arrived in Washington. That is, he did not have a well-rounded program, with all inconsistencies ironed out, reduced to draft bills, cleared with key legislators, and ready to go. Almost, it seemed, the opposite; policy making during the hundred days was improvised and helter-skelter. Yet Roosevelt was far better prepared than appeared on the surface. The work of his Brain Trust, his seasoning as governor, and his natural curiosity had given him knowledge of a wide range of policy issues. In a few areas, such as conservation, he had deeply rooted ideas that helped to stabilize the rest of his thinking. Many issues were left unresolved in his mind and within his administration, but Roosevelt had a grasp of the complexities of the issues and their interrelationships that was rare in a beginning President. And he had ready at hand an impressive store of resources for program making; he and his aides were in touch with a great variety of people who were working on the major problems of the day from different approaches. Confident of his own sense of direction and ability to make the right choices, he could assemble quickly the elements of a program.

For the most part, the elements were brought in from outside the government through the appointees of the new administration. There were exceptions: the emergency banking act, the economy act, and, to a lesser extent, the agricultural adjustment act owed a good deal to the advice of career men. But on the whole the bureaucracy was mainly administrative and technical in competence, and was still suspected of Hooverism. Even though many of the proposals being considered had been under discussion in governmental circles for years, civil servants were not often called on for advice. Except for the rudimentary machinery in the Budget Bureau, there were no permanent facilities for top-level assistance in program development and co-ordination. Roosevelt carried most of the load himself, with the help of a few overworked individuals like Moley.

The success with which the program was developed and put through Congress was due in large part, of course, to Roosevelt's well-known political skill. He knew all the written and unwritten political rules and the nuances of legislative-executive relations. In his personal contact with legislators, he was almost invariably charming and persuasive. He had

superb timing and skill in the conduct of public relations.[28] He made adroit use of patronage.

Probably Roosevelt's most important asset at this time was his flexibility. He could adjust to changing situations and accommodate to the wishes of others, tolerating many inconsistencies and ambiguities, without losing his way. It was this flexibility that enabled him to make rapid shifts and take prompt countermeasures so as to retain initiative and preserve momentum on several occasions when his program seemed in danger of bogging down.

An Active Congress

But it would be a mistake to attribute all responsibility or credit for the acts of the hundred days to Roosevelt and others associated with the Executive. Although most of the ideas that were woven into legislation were contributed by the Brain Trust or gathered from non-legislative sources, many of the proposals that became law had originated in congressional investigations, studies, and debates. In some cases it was Congress, not the President, that supplied the impetus to legislation. And completely aside from the substance of the New Deal measures, much credit for their passage was due the Democratic leaders in the House and Senate who provided expert and devoted parliamentary support, sometimes to measures they personally opposed or did not understand. The sacrifice of cherished legislative prerogatives involved in jamming a major measure through both houses in only a few days was not a minor matter. The accumulated resentment of the rank-and-file in the House was directed against the stern discipline of their own leaders as well as against the President.

The dynamics of the legislative-executive situation, as it evolved through the session, merit particular attention. After getting over the hurdle of the Economy Act, Roosevelt had Congress more or less completely at his disposal for several weeks. Such measures as those creating the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Tennessee Valley Authority

[28] "His messages to Congress were strategically timed and positive and specific in character. Disagreement with his proposals was interpreted by the general public as obstructionism. His swift pace, his boldness in assuming responsibility, and his definite recommendations not only stimulated popular support of his policy, but likewise branded as dissenters and critics congressmen holding to different policies. His radio talks to the nation served the double purpose of reassuring the people and breaking down resistance in Congress." Herring, *American Political Science Review*, p. 67.

were passed with little debate. But as the session wore on, the legislative pot began to bubble. The lid was kept on in the House through tight procedural control by the leadership, but the Senate was not so easily managed. The critical point was about mid-April, when Roosevelt kept his momentum by surrendering to the inflationists on his own terms, thus ensuring passage of his farm program, and then went on to absorb the pressure for the thirty-hour bill into the broader proposal for the National Industrial Recovery Act. From then on he was, for all his bravado, like the man riding the tiger.

In the final month of the session, there was a general reassertion of legislative tendency to inquire, to amend, and to obstruct, with particularly rapid stiffening in the left and right wings. By the time the Recovery Act reached the Senate, there was no longer a soft center through which major legislation could be driven at will and without prolonged discussion; the bill barely squeezed through without major amendments. About this time the administration refrained from submitting, for fear of disapproval, some proposals in the field of foreign affairs. Although the issue was never sharply drawn, a great many legislators seemed prepared to risk presidential displeasure over the bank deposit insurance issue. Finally came the question of restoring the veterans benefits, a subject traditionally controlled closely by Congress. This offered an occasion for uniting conservatives and progressives alike in a stand against the President. In the end, the issue was resolved in a typical legislative-executive power play, in which both sides had to compromise.

This is not to say that Roosevelt's influence with Congress was used up by the end of the session. Undoubtedly he could have prolonged the session and eventually achieved other successes. But from then on success would require politics as usual. The honeymoon was over.[29]

[29] It is perhaps worth noting that in contrast to the strong executive leadership Roosevelt hinted at in his inaugural address and largely practiced in his first session of Congress, he opened the next session with emphasis on cooperation and conciliation between the two branches. For several months thereafter his tendency was to leave Congress to its own devices. Only when this course clearly was resulting in confusion and dissipation of energy did he move in. Even so, his methods were far from dictatorial. He relied on discussion and bargaining with legislative leaders, frequently sacrificing lesser ends for greater ones. E. Pendleton Herring, *Presidential Leadership* (1940), pp. 63-66.

CHAPTER 27

SOME VENTURES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The pressure to get involved in policy making on the war debts and related matters, which Roosevelt began to feel shortly after his election, was ample warning, if one was needed, that his important responsibilities would not all be internal to the United States. Even in an era of isolationism, the President of the United States could not escape being a world leader of sorts. Roosevelt himself was anxious to give the role a full reading. Undeterred by the problems of organizing his administration and steering the legislation of the hundred days, he turned his attention, about three weeks after inauguration, to foreign leaders and international affairs. His brisk confidence and the aura of success that now surrounded him touched off a world-wide burst of optimism. Perhaps here was a statesman whose benign touch would lead the world to recovery and a stable peace. These hopes, unfortunately, proved to be premature.

PROBLEMS AND AMBIGUITIES

Between election and inauguration day there had been several ominous developments abroad. In January, Adolph Hitler achieved power in Germany and began terrorizing potential sources of opposition. His blatant militarism and disregard of international obligations were quickly recognized as serious threats to the world order. Across the Pacific, Japan had long since cast aside the settlements of the Washing-

ton Conference of 1922 and embarked on a policy of militarism and imperialism, accompanied by hostile propaganda against the United States and other Western powers. In February 1933, it walked out of the League of Nations in protest over discussion of its activities in Manchuria.

The Hoover administration had dealt with these events of its closing weeks as best it could in view of its short tenure and the existing state of world opinion and political organization. The Stimson doctrine of refusal to recognize the legitimacy of acquisitions by conquest was reasserted to back up the League's efforts to censure Japan. Hoover also sought to relax tensions between Germany and its neighbors by pushing for the World Economic Conference at an early date and by having the American delegation take constructive positions at the World Disarmament Conference. His request to the lame duck Congress for authority to embargo shipments of arms to aggressor nations was intended to strengthen the American hand in these negotiations.

In his pre-inaugural talks with Roosevelt and Hull, Secretary Stimson sought to alert the new administration to the entire range of foreign policy problems. Roosevelt's quick endorsement of the administration's policy on Manchuria and the arms embargo was highly satisfying to Stimson. It also encouraged the upholders of the Wilsonian tradition in the Democratic party to believe that the new President would take a broad view of American responsibility in the world.

Differences of Approach

Yet there was an ambivalence in Roosevelt's approach that reflected the sharp differences of opinion within his party—within the whole country, for that matter—about international affairs. He did, undoubtedly, want the United States to play an active part and exert a constructive influence in the world, setting an example by high-minded national conduct. He was anxious to establish friendly relations with other countries and their leaders and to do as much as possible to ease tensions and clear up international problems. He also believed, in principle, that peace and mutual prosperity would be enhanced by breaking down barriers to the flow of people, money, and goods among all nations. The Democratic platform and Roosevelt's campaign speeches had contained broad language along this line.

At the same time, Roosevelt was sensitive to the isolationist and

nationalist views that were widely held in the United States and that were constantly being given forceful expression in Congress. Thus he had long ago given up advocating membership in the League of Nations and made his peace with most of the old isolationists on the common ground of domestic progressivism. In his inaugural address, pursuing a theme from his campaign and following the implications of his position during the negotiations with Hoover, he had asserted that the goal of domestic recovery would take precedence over international economic readjustment. This was more than a statement about how he intended to spend his time. The domestic policies toward which he was then leaning and which were rapidly translated into law in the succeeding weeks—agricultural adjustment, currency inflation, and industrial cooperation, for example—were all aimed at raising prices within the United States. Such men as Moley and Tugwell repeatedly advised him that, for the time being at least, these policies could not be squared with economic internationalism as practiced by the Hoover administration and urged by a substantial wing of the Democratic party. The prospective New Deal would require not currency stabilization and the gold standard but letting the dollar "find its own level" in international exchange; not elimination of all trade barriers but protection of the American market. Furthermore, both the old-fashioned isolationists and the new-fashioned economic nationalists approached the idea of international negotiations, such as the impending World Economic Conference, with reservations about the intentions of Great Britain, France, and other colonial powers. They suspected that Hoover and the State Department had not been sufficiently firm in upholding the American interest against the wily foreigners. They were determined, as one of them put it, that the United States should no longer be the international fat boy.

Conflict Built In

Roosevelt appeared to ignore this conflict of attitude and doctrine in organizing his administration. Cordell Hull, a dedicated if somewhat naive internationalist, was installed as Secretary of State. Aided by the experienced new Undersecretary, William Phillips, Hull quickly established working relationships with the career men and dug into the diplomatic business of the department. One of the subjects in which he particularly interested himself was the World Disarmament Conference, which had been going on for over a year and was now almost stalled.

Hull conferred with his old friend Norman Davis, who had been heading the United States delegation, and soon sent him back to Geneva to try to get the conference moving again. Hull also pressed toward his long-time goal of free trade. With Roosevelt's permission, he consulted other cabinet members and began drafting a bill that would permit the President to make reciprocal agreements with other nations for reduction of tariffs without having to get over the hurdle of Senate approval in each case.

But apparently without consulting Hull, or at most giving him small chance to object, Roosevelt appointed Moley, one of the most articulate of the economic nationalists, as Assistant Secretary of State. By Roosevelt's instruction, Moley's duties, in addition to the work as a presidential assistant that took most of his time, included staff work on war debt negotiations and supervision of preparations for the World Economic Conference. Moley entered the State Department with ill-concealed disrespect for the Secretary and open hostility to "cookie pushers" and other symbols of the old regime. Conflicts of personality and policy were almost inevitable.

A VENTURE IN PERSONAL DIPLOMACY

Apparently oblivious to this cleavage, Roosevelt proceeded, as soon as the banking crisis of his first days in office had eased, to occupy the position of world leadership that awaited him. The occasion was provided by the standing requests of Great Britain, France, and other nations for bilateral discussions of war debt adjustment and other economic matters prior to the World Economic Conference (for which a date still had not been set). The Hoover administration, at Roosevelt's instruction, had told these governments that the new administration would receive their representatives after March 4. In the latter part of March, Roosevelt turned to this matter and recognized an opportunity to launch out into foreign affairs at a high level and open up the whole world to his influence. He opened bilateral talks, which began with economics but turned into get-acquainted sessions for exploration of many mutual problems, with every country with which the United States had diplomatic relationships. Eleven nations responded to invitations to send special representatives; the others were represented by their regular missions in

Washington. The parade of diplomats through the White House and State Department began late in April and continued through the month of May, simultaneously with Roosevelt's heaviest involvement in formulating legislation.

The first visitor was Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald of Great Britain, who was followed in a few days by ex-Premier Edouard Herriot of France. Roosevelt had hinted to the British and French embassies that these were the particular gentlemen he would like to have come, thinking that of the leading figures in the two countries, they were the most likely to be easy to deal with.[1] The British and French governments saw no harm in obliging, especially since Roosevelt's insistence on "separate" discussions covering the war debts and the conference preparations required the sending of sizable delegations. The accommodating gentlemen discussing war debts at the White House could be supported and restrained, if necessary, by tough negotiators sent to discuss general economic matters at the State Department.

There was a bit of awkwardness at the start because while the British and French delegations were en route, Roosevelt took the United States off the gold standard—a step they had intended to prevent if they could. However, they accepted the *fait accompli,* and Roosevelt's charm soon had the discussions going pleasantly. At the expert level, where Moley and his special assistant, New York banker James Warburg, did most of the negotiating (although Hull sat in), there was cautious progress toward agreement on something called an "improved gold standard" that would reconcile the interests of the United States, on one hand, and the European countries, on the other. While Hull could arouse no widespread enthusiasm for tariff reductions, he got Great Britain to agree to a truce on further raises until the World Economic Conference, where he planned to propose a comprehensive tariff-reducing scheme.

On the war debts there was less progress. Roosevelt presented as a basis for discussion an involved formula (dubbed "The Bunny" by Warburg, Moley, Douglas, and others who worked on it) for cancellation of interest and long-term amortization. Somewhat to the surprise of the

[1] Laborite MacDonald was then heading (some said fronting for) a national coalition government in which hardboiled conservatives seemed to have the most influence. Herriot's government had been voted down in December for proposing to pay the war debt installment, so he was popular in and presumably friendly toward the United States even though relatively powerless at home. Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), pp. 199-201.

Americans, first MacDonald, then Herriot, turned out to be "magnificently vague about all aspects of the debt issue."[2] After rambling discussions, they seemed satisfied by the issuance of optimistic—but, so far as the Americans could see, meaningless—joint statements. A little perplexed by this, Roosevelt swore Moley and Douglas to secrecy and had them arrange for the chief British economic adviser (who under the American terms was not supposed to have anything to do with the debts) to stay in Washington after MacDonald went home for further talks about "The Bunny."

Despite the lack of specific agreements, the talks with MacDonald and Herriot were carried on in great harmony. Roosevelt was pleased to find that his visitors were fellow optimists and idealists. Although he knew that they were not truly representative of official thinking and probably could not commit their respective governments to anything significant, he fell in with their enthusiasm and, as Moley wryly noted, "was intrigued by this opportunity to drink dizzying draughts of conversational *Weltpolitik*."[3] The talk ranged widely over politics and economics, with frequent assertions of friendship, confidence, and cooperation. Roosevelt assured MacDonald that he would get behind the World Disarmament Conference, where the latter had just presented a major proposal intended to deal with the Hitler threat. And despite the hopes of some of his advisers that the World Economic Conference would be deferred indefinitely, Roosevelt agreed to an early date—June 12.

After the departure of MacDonald and Herriot, the discussions with other visiting delegations went on, in the early part of May 1933, in a mood of general optimism. Even the emissaries of Germany and Japan were conciliatory and full of expressions of regard for the new administration in the United States. The heavy publicity given to these talks soon built up great hope in the United States and abroad. Concurrent success of Roosevelt's legislative program enhanced his prestige; he was hailed as the miracle man who would bring prosperity and peace to the whole world. Hull was euphoric. But a journalist who was close to the other wing of the administration summarized the doubts: "Before we knew it, we were back in the familiarly vulnerable position of 'leadership' in European affairs. Mr. Roosevelt's policy of being a 'good neighbor' began to look suspiciously like the old role of the rich uncle."[4]

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), p. 182.

A CAUTIOUS STEP OUT OF ISOLATION

Then Roosevelt made his bid to be the world peacemaker. The arena was the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva. The situation had been drastically changed since the beginning of the conference by the coming to power of Hitler, who now appeared to be on the verge of taking Germany out of the conference and starting to rearm in earnest, which would end any possibility of general disarmament. However, there was some chance that the threat would serve to bring other nations into agreement on a collective security arrangement that might both deter Hitler and permit some measure of general disarmament, which was urgently desired for economic reasons. In March, Ramsay MacDonald presented such a plan to the conference. Within a system of arms limitation, he proposed machinery for establishing who was the aggressor in any international dispute. Economic sanctions might then be applied.

Roosevelt began to be interested in disarmament; he made cautious moves to be in position to support the MacDonald proposal. Norman Davis was instructed to avoid major commitments but to make any intimations necessary to keep the conference going. Roosevelt was not yet sure that he could offer the United States signature on a collective security pact, but he was willing at least to promise that the United States would not obstruct any collective measures others might take against aggressors. Even that would be a departure from traditional American policy, and perhaps even require legislation, because under the existing interpretation of neutrality the United States could insist on its right to trade with anyone at any time. Such action might defeat attempts of other nations to apply sanctions to aggressors. To get around this obstacle, Roosevelt and Hull began quietly pushing the request that Hoover had submitted to the lame duck Congress for presidential authority to embargo arms shipments to aggressor nations. The appropriate resolution was passed in the House without difficulty on April 17.

MacDonald's visit enhanced Roosevelt's interest in disarmament. Somewhat to the concern of the State Department, he took personal charge of the liaison with Geneva and prepared to make a significant American proposal.[5] Early in May the conference was at a crisis. The

[5] The division head who had been handling the department's communications to Davis confided to his diary: "With regard to disarmament, Bill Phillips and I are much

MacDonald plan seemed about to be nibbled to death, and Germany was more and more aggressive. On May 12, Hitler announced that he would address the Reichstag a week later on arms and foreign policy. This, it was widely predicted, would be the end of European disarmament. Davis reported great pressure at Geneva; if the United States was going to make a strong proposal, now was the time.

Roosevelt conferred with Hull and decided to act. He drafted a statement in the form of an appeal to the heads of all nations for reduction and eventual elimination of offensive weapons, adherence to the MacDonald plan, and a "solemn and definite pact of non-aggression." This was dispatched in separate messages and with much formality to some fifty-four chiefs of state just before the Hitler speech.[6]

The message may or may not have been responsible, but Hitler's speech to the Reichstag was surprisingly moderate. Roosevelt authorized Davis to press forward. On May 22, Davis announced that the United States was prepared to reduce all armies to the level of police forces, to assist in formulating an inspection system, to accept the MacDonald plan, to consult with other nations in the event of threats to the peace, and to refrain from action tending to frustrate sanctions against aggressors. Hull considered it "a radical change in the traditional attitude of this country"[7]

This proved to be the high watermark of Roosevelt's effort on disarmament. His proposals, to his and Hull's surprise, were received with considerable coolness in circles where warm response had been expected. France pointed out that the signature of the United States on a nonaggression pact and a commitment to consult in case of trouble was a long way from guaranteeing European security. Other nations quibbled about how to define "aggression" and distinguish "offensive" and "defensive"

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upset over the lack of clear guidance that is being given our Delegation. . . . The President has now taken entire charge, his instructions are very brief and not clear, they are issued without adequate knowledge of what has gone before, and, above all, they are counter to the War and Navy Departments' views. We are not permitted even to send over to War and Navy the texts of the outgoing messages." Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (1956), p. 94.

[6] The message, plus explanatory notes and a cross-section of the acknowledgements Roosevelt received, is in Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Vol. 2 (1938), pp. 185-201. Cited hereafter as *Roosevelt Public Papers.*

[7] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull,* Vol. 1 (1948), p. 228.

weapons. Thus Roosevelt's proposals were not seriously taken up in Europe.

Even so, what seemed an unsatifactory commitment to Europe seemed a major commitment to the United States Senate. Isolationists went after Davis in full cry. The White House issued explanations that the proposed agreement to "consult" about threats to peace presumed substantial prior disarmament. Furthermore, the United States would cooperate in sanctions against aggressors only if it agreed with the verdict that they were aggressors. But that was not enough to reassure the doubters. The arms embargo resolution was then before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where isolationist Key Pittman of Nevada was chairman and Senators Borah and Hiram Johnson the ranking Republicans. The committee insisted on amending the resolution to provide that if the President declared an embargo, it would have to be against all parties in a dispute, not just a party someone else had branded an aggressor. This, of course, would be of little help to Great Britain and France if they tried to apply sanctions to Germany; it was a reaffirmation of aggressive neutrality. Hull pleaded gently but to no avail. Roosevelt was just then concerned about getting the industrial recovery bill through the Senate, and he had already committed himself to appoint Pittman to the delegation to the World Economic Conference. He wanted no unnecessary trouble. The resolution was allowed to die in the committee.

From then on, interest in disarmament faded rapidly. The conference adjourned in the fall of 1933, never to reconvene.[8]

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE QUANDARIES

During the month of May, while Roosevelt made his bid for leadership in world disarmament, his associates were busy with preparations for the World Economic Conference. In the wake of the MacDonald and Herriot visits, the President seemed enthusiastic, and it was widely predicted that the United States would take the lead at London. But by the end of May, when the American delegation left for the conference, most of Roosevelt's enthusiasm and any semblance of American unity of purpose had been dissipated.

[8] For a general discussion of the disarmament venture see *Ibid.*, pp. 22-30; Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-15; Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-95.

For a while, Roosevelt seemed to lean toward a doctrine he had previously scorned. His second fireside chat, on May 7, was mainly devoted to a review of the administration's domestic policies and accomplishments, but at the end he turned to the world situation and said: ". . . I want to emphasize to you that the domestic situation is inevitably and deeply tied in with the conditions in all of the other Nations of the world." Prosperity in the United States could not be permanent without prosperity everywhere. He reported that he and the foreign leaders who had visited Washington had talked of reduction of the burden of armament costs, scaling down barriers to trade, and stabilization of currency values. "The international conference that lies before us must succeed," he said. "The future of the world demands it and we have each of us pledged ourselves to the best joint efforts to this end."[9]

Pleased to have the President talking this way, Secretary Hull determined to lead the American delegation to London. He also cleared his reciprocal trade bill through a cabinet committee, with the idea of having it introduced in Congress so as to provide a basis on which he could make comprehensive proposals for world tariff reductions. Warburg, Woodin, and the other monetary experts watched the international behavior of the dollar, now freed from the gold standard. They calculated that a temporary agreement to peg the dollar at about $4.00 to the British pound would be a reasonable way to meet the British and French desire for currency stabilization.

But as the days passed, doubts began to creep in. Departure from the gold standard had started the dollar depreciating in international exchange and seemed to be responsible for the recent upward spurt in prices at home—the very thing that had been desired. If the dollar were pegged to the pound, Roosevelt argued to his monetary experts, would that not stop the rise? Why stabilize until the maximum benefit from the free dollar had been obtained? Tugwell and others mainly concerned with domestic recovery pointed out something else: The recent rise in prices, plus the additional rises that were expected as soon as the new agricultural and industrial recovery legislation took hold, would have the effect of making American goods dearer and harder to sell abroad but would make the American market more attractive to goods from abroad. Why push for tariff reductions under those conditions? Was it not better to use the authority that had been deliberately planted

[9] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 167.

in the new legislation to erect special barriers to cheap foreign goods, thus protecting the American price level?[10]

By the middle of May, Roosevelt was edging away from what was presumed to be his own program. He did not, however, talk over his doubts with Hull, who continued to look forward to the agreements that might be reached at London. Nevertheless, several events occurred before the conference that were disturbing to Hull and that served to widen the gap between the internationalists and the nationalists in the administration.

Bunny Business

One such incident was Hull's accidental discovery that Moley and Douglas were carrying on ultra-confidential negotiations with the British over "The Bunny," Roosevelt's war debt proposal.[11] Since they were acting on presidential instructions, Hull's only recourse could be to the President himself. He did not make an issue of it, but the experience was hardly conducive to mutual confidence within the administration.

When Hull was finally brought in on the discussions, he learned that the British were now trying to shift from agreement on general debt adjustment to the possibility of relief from the next payment, due on June 15. With Phillips' strong backing, he urged Roosevelt to give some sort of satisfaction in order to create a favorable climate for the Economic Conference. However, Roosevelt continued to insist that the debts and the conference were separate matters. He sent the British government a bland note to the effect that the June payment—or at least a partial payment on account—would be expected. He also made it clear that the delegation to London would have no authority to discuss the debts.[12]

Moley Speaks Out

Moley hastened the deterioration of his relations with Hull and

[10] Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), p. 291; Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[11] The British ambassador, innocent of the peculiar administrative habits of the new administration, went one day to the State Department to give Moley the latest word from London. Finding that Moley was out of town, he called on Hull and discovered, to the embarrassment of both of them, that the Secretary knew nothing about the negotiations. Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-12.

[12] "That stays with poppa," he said to his staff. James M. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (1956), p. 179.

planted in the Secretary's mind additional doubts about the President's intentions by a radio speech he made on May 20. By now, Moley was concerned and irritated by the inconsistency of the administration's position. "I knew, for a certainty," he said later, "that Secretary Hull did not realize that in any actual conflict between his domestic program and a program of international economics the President would decide in favor of his domestic program."[13] Since he planned to leave the administration soon, Moley felt he could afford to take a chance. He told Roosevelt in a general way what he proposed to say and the President made no objection. Hull had no warning.

Devoting his talk to the conference, Moley did not attack the internationalist program directly but stressed the obstacles to reaching major agreements in the economic field. He cautioned against expecting or trying for too much. The ills of each country were mainly domestic in origin, he insisted, and so were the cures.[14] The speech was moderate enough in tone, but its implications were picked up by the newspapers and widely discussed at home and abroad. Had the administration changed its attitude about the conference? Did this mean an open break between Hull and Moley? Was Roosevelt preparing to drop Hull? Afterward, Moley assured Hull that he meant nothing personal and, despite the rumors, he was not after the Secretary's job; he hoped there could be an honest difference of opinion. Disturbed as he was, Hull did not make an issue of it with either Moley or Roosevelt, but by then he must have been very doubtful of where he stood with the President.[15]

Hull With Empty Hands

Late in May, Roosevelt made a decision on currency negotiations that weakened Hull's position still further. The continued depreciation of the dollar in international exchange had changed the monetary situation since the preliminary talks in Washington. The British and French now suggested trying to reach agreement outside the conference on temporary stabilization of the relative values of the dollar, the franc, and the pound. Roosevelt accordingly sent Oliver M. W. Sprague, a Harvard professor who had recently become adviser to the Treasury after occupying a similar post with the Bank of England, and George L. Harrison,

[13] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
[14] See *Ibid.*, App. E, pp. 409-14, for text of the speech.
[15] Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 249.

Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as a separate mission to discuss stabilization. The regular American delegation could make general monetary proposals to the conference, but the important authority to negotiate immediate tentative agreements (for FDR's approval), was reserved to Sprague and Harrison. To Moley's amazement, Hull accepted this limitation without argument.[16]

The blow that really crushed Hull came while he was on his way to London. He left on May 31 believing that the reciprocal trade bill that he had left on the President's desk would promptly be submitted to Congress. With this evidence of the administration's intent, he could make a strong proposal to the conference for reduction of tariffs. On the ship he received radio reports that the bill was not to be submitted. On querying the President he received confirmation: "The situation in these closing days is so full of dynamite that immediate adjournment is necessary. Otherwise bonus legislation, paper money inflation, etc., may be forced. . . . Therefore, tariff legislation seems not only inadvisable, but impossible of achievement."[17] The President went on to tell Hull that he was authorized to negotiate trade treaties for submission to the Senate in the regular way, but Hull and everyone else knew that this was almost futile. Hull now realized that the three main subjects of interest—first the debts, then currency, then tariffs—had been foreclosed to him. "I left for London with the highest hopes," he recalled, "but arrived with empty hands."[18]

THE LONDON CONFERENCE

Roosevelt had not consulted Hull in appointing the delegation that was to accompany him. The vice-chairman was James M. Cox, the Ohio publisher who had headed the ticket on which Roosevelt ran for Vice President in 1920. The chairmen of the two congressional committees on foreign affairs, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and Rep. Samuel D. McReynolds of Tennessee, were included. Roosevelt tried to get Hiram Johnson to represent the Republicans, but the old isolationist was too afraid of having his senatorial independence compromised; the assignment went to Senator James Couzens of Michigan. At the last minute

[16] Moley, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
[17] Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 251.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Ralph D. Morrison, a heavy campaign contributor from Texas, was added as a favor to Garner. Bullitt, Warburg, and Feis were assigned as the principal staff advisers, and Charles Michelson went along to handle the publicity.

It was an odd group. None of the delegates had ever previously attended an international conference. Their ideas on monetary and tariff matters, to the extent that they were known, were divergent. Cox and McReynolds were more or less like Hull in favoring stable currencies and low tariffs. Almost the opposite were Couzens and Pittman, the latter being mainly interested in getting a break for silver in any monetary agreements that might be reached. What Morrison thought, nobody knew. The delegates were inadequately briefed. Baruch and Moley, who were present at their send-off meeting with the President, tried to provoke some discussion that would lead to clarification of the American position, but the effort was unsuccessful.

Moley, being busy with the domestic program and having little faith in the enterprise anyway, had asked the President not to be included. They had a loose understanding that after Congress adjourned he might follow the group to London as a sort of liaison man with any additional instructions Roosevelt might want to send.

Preliminary Confusion

The spotlight was on the American delegation as it arrived in London. There was a prevailing assumption that little could be accomplished unless the United States gave its support or, better yet, took the lead. Reporters from all nations were on hand, serving up a rich diet of speculation, gossip, and leaks from the various delegations. Clashes within the American group and Hull's inability to control it were soon common knowledge. A meeting of the delegation on the eve of the official opening ended in discord with Hull threatening to resign. Bullitt hurriedly cabled the President, who sent Hull a reassuring message.

Tension was raised at the outset when Prime Minister MacDonald included in his opening speech a reference to the war debts, a subject that had been declared out of bounds by prior agreement. Hull's delay in making an opening statement for the American delegation was interpreted as a protest. Actually, the delay was in getting Hull's speech cleared with Roosevelt. Hull's draft was a strong indictment of economic nationalism, and Roosevelt toned it down in several places. Even so, it

was a fervent plea for international cooperation. Shortly afterward, there was a confusing incident in the American delegation. Hull had the technical staff prepare a plan for all nations to reduce tariffs by 10 per cent. Before he could clear it with his colleagues, it was inadvertently disseminated as an official United States proposal. Pittman, now in open defiance, insisted that it be withdrawn.

Pressure for Stabilization

During the opening days, the main action was in the three-power talks on currency stabilization going on in London but officially outside the conference. France, with support from Great Britain, urgently asked for a temporary pegging of the dollar, the pound, and the franc. Sprague and Harrison, operating independently of Hull by Roosevelt's direction, negotiated a temporary agreement to stabilize at $4.00 to the pound and referred it back to Roosevelt with a recommendation that he approve it for the sake of getting the conference off to a favorable start.

One of the implications of the proposal was to commit Roosevelt not to exercise the inflationary options of the Thomas amendment to the farm bill. This meant little to the hard-money-minded negotiators in London, but it meant a great deal at home. Rumors of the agreement were apparently responsible for a dive in stock and commodity prices. Inflationists in Congress protested loudly. Consulting his monetary experts, Roosevelt rejected the proposal.[19] He reminded his negotiators that he was not anxious to stabilize. If there were to be any agreement at all, it should be on more advantageous terms to the United States—something like a loose agreement to maintain the dollar and the pound at about $4.25, rather than a tight pegging down to $4.00. Harrison withdrew from the negotiations, leaving Sprague in charge.

As soon as Congress adjourned, Roosevelt started a yachting vacation off the New England coast. Before he left, Moley inquired if the President still wanted him to go to London; the answer was affirmative. But in the succeeding days, as Moley made his preparations to leave, he was assailed by doubts. Others in the administration advised that he was foolish to get involved. With reporters watching his every move, he had the Navy fly him to Nantucket and take him out to Roosevelt on a de-

[19] The stabilization agreement was on Roosevelt's desk during the closing hours of the session when he was having his close game of bluff over the veterans benefit appropriation. Just at that point he was probably unusually sensitive to congressional disapproval.

stroyer. They talked it over, and Roosevelt remained of the opinion that Moley should go. His instructions were of the most general sort: to bring the people in London up-to-date on events at home, and to convey the background of Roosevelt's thinking that had led to rejection of the stabilization agreement.

Moley Arrives

By now the conference had bogged down, and the American delegation was in complete confusion. Although the press statement (which Roosevelt himself had written) said that Moley would spend only a week in London "in a sense as a messenger or liaison officer" for the President, it was widely assumed that he was being sent to take charge. Moley was the center of attention as he arrived in London. Uneasy about his relations with Hull, he assured both the Secretary and the press that he was only a messenger with no special status or authority, but his protests were unheeded. The other delegations all wanted to deal with Moley.

Moley turned first to the currency stabilization talks and discovered that Sprague was about to reach agreement on a new tripartite declaration. The proposal appeared to him quite acceptable; it would bind the United States in no important respect and would capture the price-raising effects of the continued depreciation of the dollar, which then stood at about $4.40 to the pound. This seemed to be what Roosevelt had been holding out for in rejecting the previous proposal. After talking with the British and French representatives and having a conference with Prime Minister MacDonald, who insisted that this agreement was imperative if the conference were to be saved, Moley helped put the finishing touches on the document and sent it off to Roosevelt for approval.

Moley had done this with only occasional reference to Hull. His intention, he said later, was to keep out of the affairs of the conference delegation, which were Hull's business; by the same rule, since the currency stabilization negotiators were reporting directly back to Roosevelt rather than to the Secretary, he thought his status as a presidential assistant gave him full license to participate with them. While it later became apparent that Hull had been very disturbed by Moley's activities, he made no immediate protest. In fact, Moley thought he had greatly improved his relations with the Secretary by offering him the distinction of making the official announcement about the currency agreement.

The Bombshell

After a forty-eight hour wait, there was amazement and consternation in both Washington and London: Roosevelt turned down the proposal. His precise reasons remain a little obscure, but apparently it was a combination of being convinced by the arguments of the economic nationalists and an instinctive feeling that his negotiators in London had allowed themselves to be rushed by the British and French bankers. His overriding objective, the political imperative, was to raise prices in the United States, and currency stabilization of any sort would presumably have the opposite effect. However innocuous the present proposal might be, and no matter how much the other nations wanted it, it was a symbol that had to be rejected.[20]

Roosevelt's advice to the American group that he was rejecting the proposal was followed by what has come to be known as "the bombshell message" addressed to the entire conference. He put his case with vehemence, even belligerence, perhaps to cover the embarrassment he may have felt at this abrupt shift of policy:

> I would regard it as a catastrophe amounting to a world tragedy if the great Conference of Nations, called to bring about a more real and permanent financial stability and a greater prosperity to the masses of all Nations, should, in advance of any serious effort to consider these broader problems, allow itself to be diverted by the proposal of a purely artificial and temporary experiment affecting the monetary exchange of a few Nations only. Such action, such diversion, shows a singular lack of proportion and a failure to remember the larger purposes for which the Economic Conference originally was called together.

Roosevelt went on to point out that "old fetishes of so-called international bankers" were giving way to nationally planned currencies, designed to be stable in purchasing power rather than in artificial terms of other currencies. The latter kind of stabilization might be discussed after the various nations had achieved recovery. Restoration of trade by eliminating barriers to the exchange of goods would be helpful. "The Conference was called to better and perhaps to cure fundamental economic ills," he concluded. "It must not be diverted from that effort."[21]

[20] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1958), pp. 222-30. discusses in some detail the rationale of Roosevelt's stand.

[21] Text of the message is in *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 264-65.

Reaction, Official and Personal

"The Conference reels," noted one reporter. "Europe explodes with resentment and wrath."[22] The prevailing official reaction was that this was a great disappointment; privately—and not too privately at that—most European statesmen condemned it as a breach of faith. MacDonald, who thought he understood Roosevelt and had staked so much on the conference, was crushed. In Great Britain there were a few favorable comments, including those of a rebellious Tory politician named Churchill and of economist J. M. Keynes, who said that Roosevelt was "magnificently right." Cox, Warburg, Sprague, and other Americans who had been involved in the stabilization agreement were disappointed; Warburg resigned on the spot. Other American delegates and journalists covering the conference were pleased but found it hard to defend the manner in which Roosevelt had belatedly chosen to assert himself.

To most observers, it appeared that Moley had been repudiated. Hull now denounced him to his face as an arrogant meddler. To Moley himself, the irony was that he had not believed in stabilization in the first place but had only been pursuing what he thought was Roosevelt's policy. In fact, he could recognize in Roosevelt's message telling the delegation he was turning down the agreement long passages from an anti-stabilization memorandum he had himself left with Roosevelt before starting to London. Remembering the warnings he had received, and reflecting on the expendability of subordinates, he tried to swallow his bitterness and sent Roosevelt a message indicating willing acceptance of the new line.

The question now was whether the conference would break up. Most of the other delegations were ready to adjourn and blame everything on the United States. Moley sent Roosevelt an "Urgent, Confidential Secret" cable suggesting that the United States propose a few weeks' recess, which would allow time for working out new positions. He added: "On personal side Pittman is only member of delegation able intellectually and aggressively to present your ideas. . . . Reconstituted delegation would be helpful here in view of developments."[23] Roosevelt, now back in Washington, sent further instructions. It was not clear to the delegates in London what he was driving at, except that he wanted the conference

[22] Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[23] Quoted by Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

to continue. Moley enlisted the help of Keynes, Walter Lippmann, and Herbert Bayard Swope and produced a statement putting the American case in the best possible terms. Hull, exerting great effort and parliamentary skill, headed off the drive for immediate adjournment, but the conference died a lingering death over the next three weeks. Little of significance was accomplished, except that Pittman emerged with a silver resolution and some of the onus for failure was lifted from the United States.

As Moley left for home after eight frantic days in London, he and Hull again seemed to be on reasonably good terms. But after he had gone, a copy of his cable to Roosevelt about reconstituting the delegation came to Hull's attention. Hull then sent off a letter complaining bitterly to Roosevelt about Moley's conduct at London and his duplicity at sending code messages reflecting on his chief's capacity while professing friendship and loyalty. In effect, it was either Hull or Moley. Roosevelt responded with affirmations of affection and confidence for the Secretary.

Moley returned to Washington eager for some reassurance of Roosevelt's confidence. Instead, Roosevelt received him as though nothing had happened. Shortly, however, hatchet man Louis Howe proposed to Moley that he take a three-month trip to Hawaii to investigate the administration of justice there. Moley brushed off this suggestion, but just before Hull was due to return, Roosevelt himself proposed a special assignment at the Department of Justice. The situation was now clear. Moley accepted the assignment and shortly thereafter left the government with all the amenities duly preserved. Sighs of relief were almost audible at the State Department.[24]

AFTER LONDON

Other diplomatic activity of the new administration's first year can be mentioned briefly. One significant event was the establishment of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. Discussion of the possibility of this step began inside the new administration shortly after March 4. In the autumn, after the London conference was out of the way, talks with the Russians were begun. Roosevelt took the matter in personal charge

[24] For accounts of the London Conference, see Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-77; Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-220; Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, pp. 246-69; Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-32.

and handled many of the negotiations himself. Agreement was reached, and Bullitt went to Moscow as ambassador, in November 1933.

The Roosevelt-Hull diplomacy was perhaps most successful in Latin America, where the "policy of the good neighbor" that Roosevelt had announced in his inaugural address was consistently applied. In the first month of the new administration, Roosevelt took the step of agreeing to work with a League of Nations Commission to prevent war between Peru and Colombia. Later in the spring, the United States made a gesture of great symbolic importance in removing the Marines from Haiti. During 1933, Roosevelt and Hull also managed to maneuver through a chaotic succession of revolutions in Cuba without forcible intervention, although there were times when this step seemed almost inescapable. Toward the end of the year, Hull attended a Pan American Conference at Montevideo. Here his sincerity of purpose was appreciated, and he had by then achieved sufficient understanding with Roosevelt that he could make moderate economic proposals without having the ground cut from beneath him. After the conference, Hull made a tour of several Latin American countries. The effort served to lay an appropriate foundation for the generally happy relations with Latin America that lasted throughout the Roosevelt administration.

The disarmament and economic negotiations of its first few months in office were maturing, perhaps even humbling, experiences for the Roosevelt administration. They were significant demonstrations of the difficulties of reconciling the President's foreign and domestic constituencies. In his first flush of domestic success and realization of his position as a world leader, Roosevelt created expectations that he could not, in the end, fulfill.

Roosevelt's motivations and actions in relation to disarmament were creditable. The situation was serious, even graver than it appeared at the time. Had his proposal led to an effective collective security arrangement, the subsequent history of the world might well have been much different. But the international situation was too intractable to yield to a hasty American proposal, particularly when the proposal did not have significant political backing at home. Roosevelt might have been able to win had he chosen to make an all-out fight with Congress on the arms embargo resolution, but the broader public consent for an effective American commitment to collective security was probably unavailable in the short run.

In the economic field, Roosevelt's well-known tolerance for ambiguity

led to difficulties. At first, he ignored warnings and tried to overlook the inconsistency between his domestic policies and the predominant goals of international diplomacy. The swift march of events served to accentuate rather than to heal the conflict, and Roosevelt's tendency to rely on makeshift administrative arrangements permitted a bad situation to get worse. The drift was understandable, considering the burden he was carrying that spring, but it was nevertheless unfortunate.

After great expectations had been created and his subordinates had all but committed him, FDR faced the dilemma squarely, made his choice, and ordered a retrenchment of the American position. When in doubt, the home front came first. It may or may not have been a "correct" decision in terms of economic theory, but it was a politically popular decision—perhaps even a necessary one—in the United States.[25] Blunt assertions of the primacy of the American interest are always tempting to a new administration, particularly when it has fostered the suspicion that the preceding administration was unduly tender to foreign interests. In any case, the circumstances and manner in which Roosevelt asserted his position were not of the sort to enhance friendship and confidence among nations.

The London conference episode also created the impression that Roosevelt was anything but considerate of his subordinates. Hull, Moley, and the others were probably unnecessarily humiliated. From the record it appears that Moley, despite his brillance, was temperamentally unsuited to the peculiar life of a presidential assistant—at least in Roosevelt's administration. The crisis of London caused the break to come sooner rather than later. In a left-handed way, however, the Moley affair contributed significantly to administrative doctrine. Memories of it were still fresh about three years later when Roosevelt's Committee on Administrative Management formulated its famous recommendation that there be presidential assistants in the White House, not in the departments, and that these individuals have among their other qualifications a "passion for anonymity."[26]

[25] Roosevelt's reasons for turning down the monetary agreement and his statements in the "bombshell" message were gradually rendered obsolescent by the evolution of New Deal Policy. For a few months after the London conference he made use of his freedom to make experiments with the currency, but gradually dropped them as having little effect. Hull always insisted that the conflict between his trade policy and the domestic policies of 1933 was more theoretical than real. (Hull, *Memoirs,* Vol. 1, p. 254). The generally mild effects on the American economy of the steps taken under the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of the following year tend to bear out this contention.

[26] U.S. President's Committee on Administrative Management, *Report* (1937).

CHAPTER 28

POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

The administrative disorder of the first few months of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Presidency has become legendary. Seldom, if ever, has Washington seen such a flux of men, agencies, and policies. There was a desperate haste to launch programs to alleviate human misery and revive economic activity. The inevitable confusion was compounded by the assumed (and probably actual) inadequacy of the existing bureaucracy to execute the new programs, an abortive economy drive that further disrupted the civil service, and an unprecedented demand for party patronage. A contributing factor was Roosevelt's highly personal (and, to his subordinates, maddeningly casual) approach to administration. Eventually, the bureaucracy was transformed, and the New Deal set about establishing an administrative order of its own, but only the beginning of this process can be described here. For several months after Roosevelt's inauguration, politics—ranging from the high politics of presidential goals for the national welfare down to the low politics of partisan patronage—clearly took precedence over administration.

THE BUREAUCRACY AND ITS PROSPECTS

The change of administrations in 1933 marked the end of over a decade of unusual stability in the executive establishment. The adjustments following World War I that were still pending at the end of the Wilson administration had been completed by the time of President

Harding's death two years later. After Calvin Coolidge had aired a few of the executive closets, the government droned along through the 1920's with little change. The federal budget ranged between $3 and $3.5 billion annually in the Coolidge period, increasing with the onset of the depression to about $5 billion in President Hoover's last two years. The executive civilian personnel roster at the end of Hoover's administration numbered 564,000 officers and employees, which was almost the same number Wilson had turned over to Harding.[1] The years of stability were characterized by a low rate of personnel turnover and a gradual extension of the merit system, the proportion of coverage increasing from 75 to 80 per cent.

Qualities of the Bureaucracy

By the end of Hoover's administration, the federal bureaucracy as a whole had the sort of competence that results from stability, with a concomitant tendency to mediocrity and red tape. There were variations from agency to agency. One could find haughty professionalism in the State Department, cherished traditions of careerism and scientific achievement in many of the technical bureaus, cynical patronage in the Post Office, and perhaps still a few traces of Ohio Gang politics in the Treasury and Department of Justice.

The years of parsimonious appropriations had encouraged frugal management, but the government was not notably well organized or efficient. A younger generation of administrative managers sought efficiency and economy through such devices as the executive budget, administrative reorganization, and position classification, but the unreconstructed chief clerks still reigned over vast domains of administrative procedure. The plans of the early 1920's for large-scale reorganization had produced little action; feeble presidential control, frequent legislative intervention, and inertia had permitted anachronisms of structure and procedure to accumulate. President Hoover was somewhat more ambitious than his predecessors to improve the administrative establishment, but amid the

[1] The Civil Service Commission reported a personnel strength of 600,000 in 1920, dropping to a postwar low of 548,000 in 1923, climbing to a high of 616,000 in 1931, and dropping back to 564,000 at the end of 1932. However, most of the reduction between 1931 and 1932 was due to a change in the basis of counting which eliminated from the total about 35,000 postal contract employees and clerks in third class post offices. U.S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1933*, p. 8.

distractions of the depression, he accomplished little except to give the economy screw another full turn. His final frustration was to have his proposals for administrative reorganization blocked by the hostile lame duck Congress. The Civil Service Commission concentrated on enforcing the procedural requirements of the merit system. Its always small appropriation further reduced by the Hoover economy program, the commission fell further and further behind in its work. For lack of staff to give new examinations, some of its lists of eligibles were several years old.

The bureaucracy was conservative but not notably partisan or ideologically motivated. Republicans naturally held most of the presidential appointments and exempt positions at the upper levels in the departments, as well as the traditional patronage jobs in the field; the Post Office patronage, in particular, had been used to mobilize Hoover support at the 1928 and 1932 Republican conventions. But after twelve years of GOP control, the edge of partisanship had been dulled. Hoover tended to protect and extend the classified civil service wherever possible. Occasionally, he confounded fellow-partisans by appointing civil servants or outside "experts" to jobs previously considered political.

With the Republicans grown stale in office and the civil service leaning heavily on the prevailing doctrine that politics and administration could and must be separated, few agencies enjoyed strong leadership or a sharp sense of mission. Some parts of the Department of Commerce did serve business with a zeal beyond the ordinary call of duty, and in other agencies there were men with ambitious plans chafing under the restraints of Republican control. But the typical civil servant was the government clerk caught up in humdrum routine; most of the leading civil servants were scientific and technical careerists, or managerial types devoted to the rationalization of personnel, budget, and other staff work. Generally, there was passive acceptance rather than active devotion to the doctrines of Republicanism. Within the limitations of its competence and imagination, the civil service was prepared to serve a Democratic administration—the more so, perhaps, because of the sag in morale that came with the impact of the Hoover economy program and the consciousness of lost political directions.[2]

[2] Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (1958), pp. 312-15.

Democratic Attitudes

Whatever its amenability to new leadership, the bureaucracy clearly was in the path of stormy weather under the new administration. Several forces were at work. One was the prospect of an economy drive. The new President had talked broadly about new functions for government, but he also had talked specifically about economy and a 25 per cent reduction in federal expenditures. This could hardly be achieved without deep cuts in governmental functions and major reductions in personnel.

Another threatening force was the tremendous pressure for patronage building up within the Democratic party. With the economy depressed and 12 million or more unemployed, a government job was prized. Democratic workers and supporters, many of them in acute personal need, clamored for their rewards. The usual reticence about such matters was absent. Farley and the Democratic state organization leaders made no secret of their intention to take maximum advantage of the available patronage. They accumulated enormous files of applications and endorsements and conferred openly about clearance procedures and "quotas" for the various groups to have "recognition." As usual in times of party overturn, a congressional committee had extracted from the Civil Service Commission a list of the jobs to which appointments could be made without examination.[3] So great was the interest in this shopping list that an enterprising publisher reproduced it for sale on Washington newsstands: "81,000 Government Jobs—Pick Yours—Only 25 Cents."[4]

A substantial amount of patronage clearly was going to be available in the federal government, not to mention the states and cities that had gone Democratic in the November landslide. About 300 top presidential appointments were in prospect—cabinet and subcabinet officers, heads of many bureaus, members of major boards and commissions, ambassadors and ministers abroad, and governors and other leading officers of the territories. Also in the presidential class were about 400 patronage jobs in the field service other than the postal service, such as collectors of customs, collectors of internal revenue, federal district attorneys and marshals, and registers of land offices. In the course of a presidential

[3] *Positions Not Under the Civil Service,* S. Doc. 173, 72 Cong. 1 sess. (1933).

[4] Harold Brayman, "Roosevelt and the Spoilsmen," *Current History,* Vol. 41 (October 1934), pp. 17-23.

term, there would also be opportunities to replace most of the 15,000 postmasters serving four-year appointments. Due to the refusal of the Senate to confirm Hoover's nominations and the resignations at the end of his administration, there were about 2,000 vacancies in the presidential class after inauguration day.

Below the presidential class were almost 100,000 positions exempt from competitive examination. Probably a fourth of these were filled on a frankly political basis—assistants and confidential clerks to cabinet and subcabinet officers, top officials of most of the nonscientific bureaus, and jobs in the field services of the more patronage-oriented bureaus. Perhaps another fourth of the exempt positions were nonpolitical in nature, being highly specialized or technical jobs for which examinations were not practical or falling within one of the special nonstatutory merit systems. But a large number of the exempt positions—perhaps as many as half—were of uncertain political status. Skilled and unskilled laborers, unclassified clerks in scattered field offices, and moderately specialized workers of various kinds could be more or less political, depending on the time and place. While partisan considerations in appointment had declined during the long period of party stability, the incumbents had little or no protection against removal. The amount of turnover would depend on how patronage-minded the Democrats were. Altogether, there were at least 25,000 and there may have been as many as 75,000 existing positions available as patronage to the incoming party.[5]

Whatever the amount of patronage legitimately available to the Democrats, it clearly was not going to be enough to satisfy the demand. Various proposals were advanced for cutting into the remaining four fifths of the federal service under the merit system. One popular suggestion was that Roosevelt issue an executive order removing civil service protection from the estimated 4,500 individuals who had benefited from "covering in" by Hoover. Some of the more extreme Democrats predicted that the entire foolishness about civil service would be swept away. The 1932 Democratic platform, they pointed out, had not contained even the conventional promise to maintain the merit system.

Even among the new administration leaders who were more interested

[5] See S. Doc. 173, and *Presidential Post Offices*, S. Doc. 176, 72 Cong. 2 sess. (1933). The figures for the positions in the presidential class are fairly precise, but the others are estimates. In these documents, the exempt positions below the presidential class are not tabulated in a way that identifies which were really patronage jobs and which were not. Informal estimates of the amount of turnover to be expected ranged between the extremes cited.

in the New Deal program than in patronage, there was sentiment for a major turnover of personnel. The theory was that Republican politicians and tools of the special interests were not only holding the political jobs but were entrenched behind the ramparts of the civil service as well. Moley, for instance, in his first press conference at the State Department, announced that one of his goals was to clean out as many Republicans as possible. He scoffed at the suggestion of a reporter that the bulk of the departmental staff was nonpolitical; his view was that "anyone who had served under the Hoover Administration had politics and that there were just as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it."[6] Most of the hopeful reformers of the early New Deal, whether or not they bore any real animus toward the civil servants, were not concerned. Good government, efficiency and economy, civil service reform, and sound administration seemed piddling, conservative, Republican, businessmen's values, characteristic of Hoover and his sort.[7] If Roosevelt was going to lead a real reform administration, a peaceful revolution, the bureaucracy could not be allowed to stand in the way. That the bureaucracy might be, or might become, a suitable instrument of the New Deal was not seriously considered.

ORGANIZING AND STAFFING

Roosevelt arrived in Washington with his personal staff, his cabinet, and about half of the leading subcabinet assignments completed. One of the main concerns of his first few months, which he sandwiched between the legislative and foreign policy activities already described, was to make the remainder of the top appointments in the departments and in the embassies abroad. Working out the organization and staffing of the various emergency programs, as they were established, was another job to which he gave particular attention. Here was Roosevelt the inventive political administrator in action.

[6] Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (1956), pp. 89-90. Moley asserted long after he had left the government: "It was no British Civil Service—competent and completely nonpolitical. What we called the Civil Service was, in the main, merely a mass of Republican political appointees frozen into office by act of Congress." Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), p. 128. *Cf.* Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), p. 261.

[7] Van Riper, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-13.

Emergency Agencies

The organizational forms used for the new emergency agencies were varied, improvised, and experimental. They seemed to be chosen less from abstract notions of good organization than from assessment of the peculiar problems in each case, the organizational and leadership resources available, and the need to generate particular kinds of political support.

The Civilian Conservation Corps, which was among the first new agencies, was a complicated problem because so many separate departments had interests in it. Roosevelt himself took the lead in working out the arrangements, with some rather inept assistance from Louis Howe. Finally, it was agreed that the Labor Department and the Veterans Administration would recruit the men, the Army would establish and run the camps, and the Departments of Agriculture (the Forest Service) and Interior (the Park Service) would plan and supervise the work to be done. To reassure organized labor that this was not fascism or forced labor, Robert Fechner, a top official of the machinists union, was made general director. Fascinated with what was being created, Roosevelt spent many hours poring over maps and arguing with subordinates about the 1,300 camp sites.

During the long wait for statutory authorization, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was provisionally assembled from the volunteers and borrowed aides Wallace had been accumulating since inauguration day. Roosevelt first asked Bernard Baruch to head the new organization, but Baruch urged the appointment of George Peek, a former colleague on the War Industries Board. A farm implement manufacturer and veteran of the farm policy battles of the 1920's, Peek was one of the most obvious candidates, and Roosevelt agreed. He also agreed to Peek's demand for direct access to the President as a condition of accepting the job. This blurred the lines of authority, since the AAA was in the Department of Agriculture and in many respects could not act without the Secretary's signature. Even before the law was passed, there was disagreement on which of its broad provisions were to be emphasized. Peek wanted to push the old McNary-Haugen policy line of unlimited farm production behind high tariff walls, with subsidized dumping of surpluses abroad, while Wallace and Tugwell were convinced of the necessity of controlling domestic production regardless of tariffs or exports.

Roosevelt umpired the dispute and persuaded Peek to go along with a program of production adjustment. The staffing of the new agency reflected an uneasy compromise between Peek's desire to surround himself with familiar associates from the elder generation of the farm lobby and Wallace's insistence on including some of the younger, more theoretical students of agricultural problems. The argument was sharpest over Jerome Frank, selected by Wallace to be General Counsel of AAA. Peek finally acquiesced in Frank's appointment but hired his own special counsel from personal funds and ignored Frank as much as he could. The stage was set for a series of policy crises and personality clashes that led to Peek's resignation several months later, and eventually to the famous "purge" by his successor of the ultraliberals in AAA—some of whom were later identified as communists.[8]

Other organizational arrangements were even less conventional. The Tennessee Valley Authority was set up as a corporation under a three-man board headed by Arthur E. Morgan, a former college president whose work and writing in the field of conservation had attracted Roosevelt's attention. While the corporate form was not new, it was unusual for a government corporation to have such a range of planning and operating responsibilities as suggested by the legislative charter of TVA. The emergency railroad program of 1933 was a complicated affair, with responsibility divided between the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and Commissioner Joseph B. Eastman carrying additional duties as Federal Coordinator of Transportation. The Farm Credit Administration was formed by consolidating several boards and farm lending corporations and other miscellaneous credit operations into an independent agency, headed by Henry Morgenthau, Jr., who reported directly to the President. By contrast, the home mortgage relief program was administered through a newly created Home Owners Loan Corporation, under the supervision of the existing Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

The relief organization was simple at the top and complicated at the bottom. Harry Hopkins, as Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, headed an independent agency reporting to the President. The agency distributed funds for direct relief and work relief partly by grants to state relief organizations and partly through its own state and local programs.

The industrial recovery and public works organizations were even

[8] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1958), pp. 45-84; Russell Lord, *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947), pp. 326-409.

more complex. General Hugh S. Johnson, who had played a key part in drafting the act, was Administrator of the National Recovery Administration. He was supposed to receive guidance from a cabinet committee known as the Special Industrial Recovery Board, chaired by the Secretary of Commerce, but being one of the most restless and dynamic figures of the New Deal, he reported to Roosevelt himself—if to anyone. After several months of resisting the board's efforts to influence policy, he prevailed on Roosevelt to eliminate it. The interior of NRA was a bewildering jungle of code authorities, staff offices, and advisory committees.[9]

The public works program established by the same act, which Johnson had hoped also to administer, was given a separate organization. Like the NRA, the Public Works Administration was headed by an administrator, who reported to the President through a committee of cabinet and subcabinet officers—in this case a Special Board for Public Works. However, the Chairman of the Special Board, Secretary of Interior Ickes, proved to be the strong man of the operation. The first administrator lasted only a few weeks, after which Ickes combined in his person the functions of chairman and administrator; the board remained in existence but increasingly under Ickes' domination. In the early phases of the program, Roosevelt watched it closely, going over the details of each project allocation. He gradually relinquished his control as Ickes proved to be a capable and cautious administrator.[10]

Almost all of the top officials of these emergency agencies were personal choices of the President. Either in their persons or in their special connections and backgrounds, they symbolized the program values Roosevelt wanted to advance. While they had been Roosevelt supporters, they were not notably partisan choices. If they were anyone's men, they were the President's. Some of them were barely acceptable to Farley and other party officials and to the leading Democrats in Congress.

Traditional Subcabinet Appointments

In contrast to the presidential handpicking of top men for the emergency agencies, the process of choosing the undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and ambassadors who remained to be selected after inaugura-

[9] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-135.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 282-88; Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes* (1953), *passim.*

tion day was political in the traditional sense. The jobs were disposed of in a complicated series of consultations, negotiations, and trades between the department heads, the White House staff (particularly Howe), National Chairman Farley, key senators, and others who had access for various reasons. While Roosevelt occasionally got involved in the selections, and of course had to approve all of them eventually, he appears for the most part to have left his department heads to make their own bargains. An exception was his finding a distant cousin, Henry L. Roosevelt, to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy, thus keeping alive the tradition of his family's occupancy of that post.

The subcabinet appointees were a highly mixed lot. Some were men of great ability, such as Undersecretary of the Treasury Dean Acheson, who apparently received his appointment through a combination of personal acquaintance with Lewis Douglas and Felix Frankfurter plus qualifying experience in Maryland politics.[11] Others were party hacks and inept misfits who contributed little to their departments. The contrast was perhaps sharpest at the Department of Commerce, where one of the new assistant secretaries was the able, scholarly, Philadelphia lawyer John Dickinson, and the other was an obscure party figure from Missouri named Ewing Y. Mitchell, who eventually was fired for incompetence and insubordination.[12] Harold Ickes, after stalling off several seekers of his two assistant secretaryships, eventually acquiesced in strictly political appointments. One went to Theodore Walters, the Democratic state chairman of Idaho, described as "a decorative and kindly figure," who despite being constantly bypassed held the office until his death four years later. The other went to young Oscar Chapman of Colorado, a protégé of Senator Costigan.[13] Secretary Frances Perkins, who was even less susceptible than Ickes to Farley's suggestions, was in no hurry to displace her predecessor's assistant secretaries. Not until August 1933 did she give organized labor its due by appointing an elderly AFL lobbyist as first assistant secretary. The Republican-appointed second assistant secretary held his

[11] This first tour of Acheson's in government service was brief, for he resigned before the end of 1933 in disagreement with the administration's monetary policy.

[12] Mitchell sought vindication by writing a lurid account of shenanigans in the Department of Commerce. See Ewing Y. Mitchell, *Kicked In and Kicked Out of the President's Little Cabinet* (1936).

[13] Arthur W. Macmahon and John D. Millet, *Federal Administrators* (1939), p. 204. Although Chapman was to have his ups and downs in the estimation of the terrible-tempered Mr. Ickes, he proved to have real ability and outlasted Ickes himself, serving as Secretary during the last several years of the Truman regime.

post until August 1934, and was retained in the department on other work for some time after that.[14] By contrast, Farley and Cummings lost no time in putting party stalwarts in top jobs in their departments.[15]

The State Department and the Ambassadors

The appointment situation at the State Department was nicely balanced. Assistant Secretary Moley, his influence strengthened by his White House connection, cooperated with Farley in seeking to "refresh" the department and the diplomatic corps, while Undersecretary William Phillips, a career diplomat, spoke for continuity and maximum use of foreign service officers. The two clashed on numerous occasions.[16] Secretary Hull, who could remember the long lines of job-seekers' suitcases arranged along the corridor walls outside Bryan's office in 1913, determined to make as few changes as possible in the departmental staff and to divide the presidential appointments evenly between political and career men.[17] Thus Wilbur Carr, with forty years' service in the department, was retained as assistant secretary in charge of administrative matters.[18] Sumner Welles, a foreign service officer, received an assistant secretaryship, and when it was decided to send Welles to Cuba as ambassador a few weeks after inauguration, the post was given to another career man, Jefferson Caffrey. A third post at that level went to Harry F. Payer, an acquaintance of Moley's from Cleveland. This "most unfortunate appointment," as the historian of the department describes it, lasted only a few months.[19]

The ambassadorial and ministerial appointments were of several types. A few at the top were assigned by Roosevelt himself for personal reasons

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 231-33.

[15] Unlike Walsh, Cummings apparently was willing to go along with Roosevelt's desire to install Felix Frankfurter as Solicitor General. However, when he was asked, after inauguration, Frankfurter declined. Harlan B. Phillips (ed.), *Felix Frankfurter Reminisces* (1960), pp. 244-47.

[16] Raymond Moley, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-37.

[17] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. 1 (1948), p. 180.

[18] Carr, although giving Hull credit for good intentions, thought that the Secretary engaged in a good deal of self-deception on matters of personnel. Hull spoke frequently of his dislike for patronage but nevertheless made a number of changes on the ground of political necessity. In October 1933, he had Carr draw up a plan for reorganizing the department that Carr regarded as "utter hypocrisy," since the patent objective was to make some jobs for Democrats. Katherine Crane, *Mr. Carr of State* (1960), pp. 311-14.

[19] Graham H. Stuart, *The Department of State* (1949), p. 312.

or incidental to the juggling of cabinet prospects. The ranking assignment to London went to the publisher of the *Louisville Courier-Journal,* Robert W. Bingham, a campaign contributor who had been considered briefly for Secretary of State. Jesse Straus, another big contributor, accepted the appointment to Paris after losing out for Secretary of Commerce. Venerable Josephus Daniels was sent to pass his sunset years in Mexico City. Breckenridge Long, who had been one of Roosevelt's peers in the Wilson administration, became ambassador to Italy after declining to serve as Assistant Secretary of State. Other political but highly creditable appointments were of historians William E. Dodd, to Berlin, and Claude G. Bowers, to Madrid. Several other appointments made at Farley's urging were not so creditable. Practically everyone concerned felt a sigh of relief when brash Mayor James Curley of Boston, who by all the precedents had strong claims to high office, eventually decided that the proffered ambassadorship to Poland was not worth his trouble. (Sensitive to the religious and ethnic factors in Massachusetts politics, he had wanted Rome.) But the turnover in ambassadors was by no means complete. Several career men continued to hold top appointments, including some who were known to be Republican in their personal politics. In addition to the holdovers, five of the fifteen new ambassadors appointed by Roosevelt at the beginning of his administration were from the career service, as were sixteen of the thirty-four new ministers.[20] The career basis of the diplomatic and consular posts of lower rank was not disturbed.

Patronage Deferred

"Little cabinet" and ambassador appointments, satisfying as they were to the individuals immediately involved, served only to tantalize the congressmen and party officials and the many thousands of ordinary Democrats who sought jobs under the new administration. But for the first four months—as long as Congress remained in session—old fashioned patronage was available only in small quantities.

The official explanations were plausible enough. The President, as everyone knew, was carrying an enormous burden. When he could find time to consider appointments, he had to take the high-ranking ones first. Until those were settled, the administration could hardly make commit-

[20] *Ibid.,* p. 316.

ments about middle-level jobs. The new department heads were looking over their agencies, creating vacancies, and making reorganizations and cuts in staff for economy reasons. When those were completed, and when the new emergency agencies started hiring, there would be lots of patronage, but it would take a little time.

These explanations undoubtedly were true, at least in part, but everyone knew there was another reason the appointments were coming through slowly. Roosevelt had intended from the beginning to go slowly on patronage until he saw what could be accomplished in his first session of Congress.[21] The situation was remarkably favorable for the employment of this strategy. With the great upheaval in the government and all the new agencies being created, there was the prospect of an unusual number of strictly presidential appointments, on which no party group had presumptive claims, which the President could dangle as bait and distribute as rewards for loyal legislative support. In the patronage areas where the unwritten rules of the game ordinarily put sharp limits on presidential discretion, he had some freedom of choice because of the turbulent party situation in many states; there were opportunities to mediate and bargain and play off competing factions against each other, and occasionally to slip in personal choices. Even in cases where Roosevelt ultimately had little choice but to accept men put forward by local sponsors, the immensity of his prestige and the atmosphere of national emergency in the weeks after inauguration made it possible for him to stall and keep the politicians guessing. As the spring wore on, it became increasingly apparent that the administration was hoarding its patronage.[22] This could not be openly admitted, of course. When asked about appointments, Roosevelt was vague and explained how busy he was. The full force of the pressure was felt by Farley, who, in his dual role as Postmaster General and Democratic National Chairman, was harassed almost beyond belief by frantic job-seekers and their sponsors.[23]

Big Jim performed nobly in the crisis. He and his staff received thousands of job-seekers and ascertained their desires and their sponsorship. He conferred with delegations from Congress, perfected his procedures for clearance and departmental liaison, dispensed a plum here and there, and even permitted an occasional peep at his provisional lists. Eventually,

[21] See above, Chap. 24.

[22] For contemporary comment on this, see *New York Herald Tribune* (Mar. 17, 1933), *New York Times* (Mar. 26, 1933), Washington *Evening Star* (May 8, 1933).

[23] Farley describes those days in *Behind the Ballots* (1938), pp. 226-27.

he insisted, there would perhaps be as many as 150,000 jobs, but everyone would have to be patient. Meanwhile, he would be keeping track of the congressional roll calls.

By the middle of May, as the end of the special session came in sight, the patronage situation was near the boiling point.[24] The congressmen themselves were under extreme pressure from their constituents to produce jobs; anticipation was giving way to outright irritation. The legislative business was now at a critical stage, with Roosevelt maneuvering carefully on such touchy issues as the industrial recovery act, the Glass-Steagall banking bill, and the controversial veterans appropriation. Representatives and senators again were reminded of the appointments pending and the benefits that might result from staunch support of the President. Then, in the last days, it was time to loosen up. Not many appointments were made before adjournment, but the bargains were struck, the commitments made and the understandings reached.

How effective was the strategy? Undoubtedly, the knowledge that Roosevelt was stalling them on patronage contributed to the rebellious mood of many congressmen by the end of the session. It may even have cost the administration a few votes. But on the whole the trading was handled skillfully, so that the votes lost were probably considerably fewer than the waverers who were brought into line. The President's "relations with Congress were to the very end of the session tinged with a shade of expectancy which is the best part of young love."[25] In his chronicle of the session, Herring concluded that the use of the patronage had added significantly to the President's strength.[26] In part, the measure of how successfully the game had been played was in the appointment statistics. When Congress adjourned, it had acted on only 272 civilian presidential nominations. Many of these were the top departmental jobs that meant little to most congressmen. Only a handful were local patron-

[24] Washington *Evening Star* (Apr. 28 and May 12, 1933); *New York Times* (May 12, 1933).

[25] Quoted by E. Pendleton Herring, "First Session of the Seventy-Third Congress," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 28 (February 1934), p. 82.

[26] "His control of patronage was the only means that he had of touching individual members of Congress directly. The President could defy pressure groups and appeal to the country over the radio. But when he wished to marshal Congress behind his program and to persuade congressmen to risk the displeasure of important interests in their districts, he needed some means of strengthening their position at home. The dangers, the faults, and the limitations of this method are obvious. Yet the session indicated that the consummation of a national program of legislation is greatly aided by transmuting through patronage the localism of our politics into support of the Chief Executive." *Ibid.,* pp. 82-83.

age. And Farley had guarded his own gate closest of all: There was not a single postmaster in the lot!

THE ECONOMY DRIVE

The spring of 1933 was a time of increasing tension for the bureaucracy. The new presidential appointees began to bring in aides of their own choices, and the mounting demands for patronage suggested a wholesale turnover. Meanwhile, the administration planned an economy campaign.

Roosevelt had promised to cut governmental expenditures by 25 per cent and to balance the budget, and an important element in his party was determined to have him fulfill the pledge. Within the administration, the leading exponent of economy was the Director of the Budget, former Representative Lewis W. Douglas. Given an unofficial assignment to work in this field after election, Douglas was one of the instigators of the appropriations rider that became law on March 3, giving the President temporary authority both to reorganize and to abolish federal agencies and functions. He was also the principal author of the special act of March 20, which authorized a sharp cut in veterans benefits and cuts in government salaries. Armed with the staff resources of the Budget Bureau and the presidential authority under these two laws, Douglas pressed forward vigorously. At this time Roosevelt, too, despite the new programs he was simultaneously launching, was bent on economy. The theory—or at least the hope—was that by cutting costs on the regular programs, plus the revenue from the beer tax and the processing tax in the farm bill, the budget might yet be balanced.[27] Douglas was an intimate member of the official family, a frequent participant in the early-morning strategy conferences at the presidential bedside.

Budget Cuts

The appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July 1 had already been voted by the lame duck Congress (except for the independent offi-

[27] This view of course became untenable when the administration committed itself to the large public works program. After that, the device of the double budget, with "regular" and "emergency" expenditures shown in separate columns, was adopted. If the regular budget was balanced, it was said to be pardonable to finance the emergency budget by deficit since it was in the nature of an investment.

ces), but on March 28 Douglas appeared at a cabinet meeting with a schedule showing how much each department was expected to save out of these appropriations to reach the economy goal of a billion dollars. Since the cuts came, in some cases, to almost 50 per cent, the cabinet members were jolted; they had been on the job just long enough to have some appreciation of what this meant.[28] However, it was deemed necessary even if painful, and for the next several weeks the agencies made frantic calculations of how to reduce personnel, cut functions, and reorganize so as to achieve major savings. Douglas kept the pressure on the departments, prepared reorganization plans by which whole bureaus and minor independent agencies might be eliminated, and searched for economies in personnel and administrative costs. Some of his plans were revealed on April 20, when he presented his request to Congress for an independent offices appropriation to reflect the veterans benefit cuts. In addition, he asked that the bill authorize the President to cancel government contracts, to place military officers on involuntary furlough at half pay, and to compel the retirement of any civil servant with over 30 years' service.

As the departments and the Budget Bureau juggled the figures, rumors of deep budget cuts, drastic reorganizations, and wholesale layoffs kept the civil service in a state of agitation.[29] The uncertainty continued for several weeks as the plans were revised. The Budget Bureau apparently softened its demands in a few cases, but early in June Roosevelt said that savings on the order of a billion dollars were in sight. It still was not clear what this would mean in terms of personnel reductions, although some of the departments had begun to drop people in sizable numbers. Commerce began by eliminating one of Mr. Hoover's pet programs, the overseas commercial attaché service. About 120 of the attachés were fired, and the rest transferred to the Department of State.

Reorganization

Late in May, Douglas worked up an omnibus administrative reorganization plan. After discussion in the cabinet and deletion of several con-

[28] Ickes, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[29] At one point, for example, it was reported that Interior, Agriculture, and perhaps other departments, were being cut over 50 per cent. Ten of Agriculture's sixteen bureaus, it was said, would be eliminated. "At a Cabinet meeting some days ago it was expressed to department heads that 'reorganization' was a mild way of saying 'elimination'." *New York Times* (Apr. 7, 1933).

troversial provisions, Roosevelt transmitted it to Congress on June 10. Presenting it so late in the session gave Congress in effect only a few days rather than the sixty days provided by law in which it could act to set the plan aside. Roosevelt explained that "the very urgent demands of the public business" had prevented its submission sooner, but since the plan would save $25 million he felt it his duty to proceed.[30]

Roosevelt's proposal included a number of the least controversial features of Hoover's reorganization scheme of the previous December, as well as several important new provisions. It called for transferring the functions of the Shipping Board and the Merchant Fleeet Corporation (independent agencies left over from World War I) to the Department of Commerce; abolishing and redistributing the functions of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Prohibition; centralizing federal disbursing functions in the Treasury; consolidating the Department of Labor's bureaus of Immigration and Naturalization; and abolishing or transferring the functions of a number of minor independent agencies to regular departments. There was also an economy provision not involving reorganization: existing appropriations for grants to the states and land grant colleges for vocational education, agricultural experiment stations, and agricultural extension work, were reduced 25 per cent.[31]

Congress, as previously noted, was in a touchy mood, and there were expressions of displeasure at having the scheme submitted at the last minute. However, Roosevelt did not respond to the suggestions that he withdraw it, and Congress adjourned without serious effort to muster the majority vote in both houses necessary to hold up the plan.

Confusion in July

The crest of the economy wave hit early in July, as the budget cuts became effective with the opening of the new fiscal year. There was great confusion, as the departments continued to revise their plans for getting under their ceilings. Employees were fired, sometimes rehired, and sometimes fired again. From contemporary accounts, it appears that about

[30] The plan was Executive Order 6166, June 10, 1933. See also Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Vol. 2 (1938), pp. 222-23. Cited hereafter as *Roosevelt Public Papers.*

[31] A convenient source of detail on this and other reorganization proposals is Lewis Meriam and Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *Reorganization of the National Government* (1939), pp. 200-12.

10,000 civil servants lost their jobs that summer. The steepest cuts were in the Department of Justice, where about 1,700 were let out; the Treasury, which reported the dismissal of almost 3,000 employees; and the Department of Commerce, which fired between 2,500 and 3,000. Other agencies lost staff in numbers ranging from several hundred at the major departments down to mere handfuls squeezed out of the small independent agencies.

For several weeks the departments were in a constant uproar of firing and reorganizing. Operations were seriously disrupted, and tension was high, as employees waited for the axe to fall. Many experienced career men were forced out of the government. The Geological Survey, for example, announced that it was dropping ten senior geologists, including one distinguished member of the National Academy of Sciences. Heavy cuts were made in the technical and research staffs of such agencies as the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Standards; these organizations would not recover from the economy drive for over a decade.

Besides the reduction in force, other parts of the economy program fell heavily on the civil service and led to apparent injustice to individuals.[32] There was a freeze on salary raises and promotions, and cuts in leave, travel pay, and other privileges.[33] Enforcement of a new provision for mandatory retirement after thirty years' service forced out many senior men on short notice. There were many complaints of distress caused by enforcement of a rule that civil servants whose husbands or wives also worked for the government were to be first to go in reductions in force.[34] In New York, the postal substitute workers marched on the Post Office in protest; under the economy regime they were getting almost no work, but as long as they had their civil service status, they could not get other jobs or go on relief.

[32] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *History of the Federal Civil Service* (1941), pp. 120-21.

[33] The foreign and consular services suffered especially acutely, because in addition to a 15 per cent salary cut, all forms of special allowances were scaled down drastically. Then, as the United States went off the gold standard, overseas employees were no longer paid in gold, and the rate of exchange swung sharply against them. Such employees suffered a net loss of 35-55 per cent in total income. Crane, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-16.

[34] This was said to strike hardest at low-income families near the bottom of the civil service ladder. There were also reports of couples going through the motions of divorce so that both could keep their jobs, while other couples deferred marriage or simply refrained from legalizing their arrangements. Helena Hill Weed, "The New Deal That Women Want," *Current History*, Vol. 41 (November 1934), pp. 179-83.

Politics and Economy

In most cases there were legitimate administrative reasons the axe fell where it did, but there was inevitably a tinge of politics about the economy program. The National Civil Service Reform League claimed that spoils raids were being conducted in the guise of economy.[35] The cuts did seem to be notably heavier in the traditionally "political" departments like Treasury and Justice. And many partisan Democrats watched with undisguised glee as Secretary Roper made cuts in the business advisory, statistical, and research activities that had been so painstakingly developed at the Department of Commerce by Mr. Hoover.

The economy program seemed more confusing—as well as more political—because it coincided with the beginning of really large-scale hiring for the new emergency programs, most of which Congress had exempted from civil service provisions. For a short time, some departments actually were firing career men in the name of economy and simultaneously hiring men referred by Farley for the new exempt jobs. Most of the departments staffed their emergency programs by transferring employees from sections being reduced for economy reasons, by hiring from the Civil Service Commission's "reemployment lists" of displaced civil servants, or by resort to the regular civil service registers.[36] In this way, an unknown number of the victims of economy eventually got other jobs in the government. However, some of the departments that had taken the heaviest cuts, such as Commerce and Justice, got little new work to which they could transfer surplus personnel. And the bulk of the new hiring, in any case, was in the newly established agencies, which relied more on Farley's unofficial employment bureau than on the Civil Service Commission's lists.

By the end of July the economy drive was slowing down. To avoid adding to the confusion, Roosevelt issued orders deferring the application of some parts of his June 10 reorganization plan beyond the effective date of August 10. He also extended the time allowed agencies to dispose of excess personnel acquired as a result of consolidations and

[35] See the League's organ, *Good Government,* Vol. I, No. 4 (October, November, December, 1933), p. 25.

[36] The Department of Agriculture was notable in this respect. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1933,* pp. 2-3.

reorganizations. Thus the least difficult of the reorganizations went into effect on August 10, and other reorganizations and small reductions in force were worked out gradually over the next few months. Certain minor reorganizations and one major money-saving provision of the June 10 plan—the 25 per cent cut in grants for agricultural extension and research work—continued to be deferred and were eventually canceled altogether.[37]

The economy drive was largely over by the end of 1933. Roosevelt continued to speak of reducing expenses and for some time showed embarrassment over failure to balance the budget, but the administration was irrevocably committed to a spending program. Lewis Douglas waned as a power in the administration. The disturbance to the civil service was vastly out of proportion to the amount of economy achieved. The figures later showed that net federal employment dropped by a little over 12,000 during the month of July 1933, when the campaign was at its height, but began to climb in August and was back to the June level by the end of September. Only a few old-line agencies made personnel reductions that stuck; in the 1933-34 fiscal year as a whole, there was a net gain of about 100,000 employees.[38] By distinguishing between "general" and "emergency" expenditures (and, one presumes, some careful classifying), the administration later was able to show that "general" expenditures had been reduced in fiscal year 1934 by about $700 million below 1933. Cuts in the veterans benefits, in government salaries, and in the regular functions of the departments apparently accounted for the reduction.[39] These reductions, coupled with an increase in revenue, produced a "general" budget that was only a little short of being in balance. However, the effect of the "emergency" programs was to increase total spending and produce a net deficit of about $3.6 billion, as compared to $2.6 billion the previous year.[40]

[37] *New York Times* (August 1, 9, 10, 1933); Meriam and Schmeckebier, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-10; *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 225-28.

[38] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1934*, pp. 5-6; *ibid., 1935*, p. 7. It might be pointed out that the difficulty of determining what happened is increased by the fact that the Civil Service Commission, in its report for 1935, revised the figures used in its 1934 report, so that the figures in various sources often cannot be reconciled.

[39] Meriam and Schmeckebier, *op. cit.*, p. 215, conclude that the reorganizations, as distinguished from the cuts in personnel and functions, produced relatively little economy.

[40] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1935*, Table 170, pp. 165-66.

THE DEMOCRATS AND THE PATRONAGE

The spring trickle of patronage had become a flood by autumn of 1933. For the remainder of Roosevelt's first term, Farley conducted the largest, most systematic, and most overt patronage operation in history.

Shortly after Congress adjourned in June, Roosevelt began making appointments to miscellaneous presidential posts in Washington and to such prized local patronage jobs as collectors of customs, federal district attorneys, and postmasters. By the end of the following session, about half of the four-year term postmasterships and most of the other presidential jobs had been filled, for a total of about 8,000 presidential appointments. Reliable statistics are lacking, but from all indications the Democrats also cut deeply into approximately 95,000 previously existing jobs below the presidential level to which appointments could be made without examination; a reasonable estimate is a turnover of 50,000 to 75,000 in this category. But the bonanza was in the new emergency agencies, most of which Congress had deliberately exempted from the civil service rules. In the year ending June 30, 1934, there was a government-wide net increase of 90,000 employees in the exempt categories.[41] Most of these jobs were filled on some sort of political basis, with the appointees subject to "clearance" if not outright beneficiaries of patronage.

Thus it is estimated that in its first sixteen months in office, the Roosevelt administration dispensed altogether about 150,000 jobs, divided roughly equally between replacements of previous incumbents and new positions. While the number of positions under the merit system remained stable, the number of exempt positions continued to increase throughout Roosevelt's first term. In 1937 there were over 300,000 exempt positions (as compared to slightly over 100,000 in 1932), and the proportion of employees under the merit system had declined from 80 per cent to 60 per cent.[42]

The "System"

The magnitude of the operation, plus Farley's penchant for orderly procedure, led to an unprecedented systematization of the patronage dis-

[41] U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1934*, p. 1.

[42] *Ibid., 1935*, p. 2; U. S. Civil Service Commission, *History of the Federal Civil Service*, p. 125.

tribution. Although there were far more applicants than jobs (twenty times as many, it was said!), each applicant's qualifications and political endorsements were duly noted, classified, and filed at the Democratic National Committee, where Farley's assistant, Emil Hurja, ran what has been described as a "political employment bureau." Under various euphemistic titles, Farley had representatives in almost every agency, charged with maximizing both the number and quality of political placements. The appointments made were charged against quotas assigned to the various states, and the state quotas were further subdivided to reflect factional cleavages. Groups that had been "For Roosevelt Before Chicago" received special consideration, but the regular party organizations ordinarily controlled most of the patronage regardless of their convention records. Farley asserted that two tests were applied to office seekers: first, personal qualifications for the job, and second, loyalty to the party and the President's program. The object of patronage was to maintain the party and to ensure the success of the administration. The political sin of personal patronage was to be avoided.[43]

The patronage operation was in fact neither as comprehensive nor as systematic as Farley claimed. The quotas were usually flexible enough to permit the administration to make bargains, grant rewards, and inflict a certain amount of punishment. Farley's assertion that qualifications were carefully ascertained was true only in relation to the previous standards about such matters. Many misfits and disreputable local bosses ended holding or controlling federal jobs, especially in the field services where the national committee's control was weaker and the local party organizations had to be relied on.

From an administrative viewpoint, the success of staffing by patronage methods depended on the agency heads. If they were undiscriminating, their organizations became known as spoils shops. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, which was first headed by an ex-congressman from South Carolina who seemed mainly interested in the patronage opportunities incident to establishing an organization with branches in almost every county in the nation, was notorious in this respect. But there were a great many able people seeking employment through political channels in 1933, and if the agency heads set high standards, insisted on recruiting through nonparty channels when necessary to find proper personnel for key jobs, and subjected all of Farley's nominees to tight screening, the

[43] James A. Farley, "Passing Out the Patronage," *American*, Vol. 116 (August 1933), pp. 20-22, 77. The assumed identity of party and presidential loyalty suggests the party organization man's outlook.

requirements of politics and of administration could be reconciled. The Department of Agriculture, which had firm top management, skillful personnel men, and a sophisticated patronage representative, was probably the most successful.[44] As time went by, Farley continued to maintain fairly good control of the appointments that required presidential nomination and Senate confirmation, but he was not always successful in influencing appointments made by the agency heads themselves. Secretaries Perkins and Ickes, Harry Hopkins, Hugh Johnson, and others provided ports through which young lawyers, professors, social workers, and other nonpolitical types entered the government in increasing numbers.[45]

The large volume of patronage that was available by no means satisfied the demand. As soon as the 1933 summer rush was over, complaints began to be heard about the failure of the administration to fire enough "Republicans." In the next several months, Roosevelt and Farley spent a good deal of time smoothing the ruffled feathers of congressmen and party leaders.[46] Soon, however, the preponderance of pressure was the other way. The scale of the patronage operation in the emergency agencies began to be publicly discussed; and Farley's article in defense of patronage, published in a major national magazine in August 1933, shocked large sectors of the public.[47] From then until the 1936 election, the reform groups, the civil service unions, most of the press, and Republican critics blasted away at the administration on the spoils issue.[48]

Roosevelt and the Civil Service

Roosevelt's first-term policy on civil service and patronage matters was ambiguous, to say the least. He claimed from the beginning to be a

[44] Paul H. Appleby, *Big Democracy* (1945), pp. 151-54, describes how the Department of Agriculture did it. For comment on the work of its patronage man, Julian Friant, see Macmahon and Millett, *op. cit.*, p. 112. That the department was not altogether inflexible in its attitude toward patronage is indicated by the familiar story of how, as an accommodation to Senator Pat Harrison, ex-governor Theodore Bilbo was hired as a high-salaried newspaper clipper in order to keep him out of Mississippi.

[45] On the Farley patronage operation generally, see Van Riper, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-28. Brayman, *op. cit.*, p. 21, provides an illuminating contemporary view.

[46] For example, see *New York Times* (Sept. 13, 1933) for report of a Senate "patronage revolt," said to be led by Key Pittman.

[47] "Passing Out the Patronage," *American*. It should be noted that Farley only defended patronage where it was permissible under the rules, including—by inference—the emergency agencies. He did not advocate return to the spoils system where merit was already established.

[48] The National Civil Service Reform League's assertion that: "Not since Grover

friend of the merit system. In July 1933 he ordered a tightening of the examination system for postmasters and instructed Farley to draft legislation that would take the postmasters out of politics altogether. However, this idea was dropped when howls of outrage came from Capitol Hill, and Farley continued to take full political advantage of his legal discretion under the "rule of three."[49] In parts of the government where the patronage system was deeply entrenched, Roosevelt played the game with zest and skill. He accepted the desire of Congress to exempt most of the emergency agencies from the civil service rules as a political necessity and was inclined to defend it as an administrative necessity as well.[50] His subordinates were allowed to take advantage of patronage opportunities when they chose to do so, and reports of violations of the rules failed to stir notable indignation at the White House.

Several early actions of the administration were considered, by civil service purists at least, to be backward steps. Roosevelt ordered that employees who had been covered into the civil service by Hoover without qualifying through examination were not entitled to places on the Civil Service Commission's "reemployment lists" if they were fired in the economy program. He signed an executive order removing from the competitive service the commercial attachés and other overseas trade promotion employees who had been blanketed in by Hoover. He also revoked the protection that had been extended by Hoover to a somewhat dubious special immigration investigations staff that Secretary Perkins wanted to clean out of the Department of Labor. Perhaps the least defensible exception of this kind was an order of June 1934, which took all the employees of a certain soldiers' home in Tennessee out of the merit system.[51]

Yet Roosevelt's claim to be a friend of the merit system was not without foundation. He withstood formidable pressure for mass raids on the protected civil service; the withdrawals from the civil service that he did authorize had some justification in many cases and amounted to a small

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Cleveland's administration has the merit system had to face such a serious challenge to its existence . . . ," was typical of the comment from reform groups. Quoted by Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

[49] *Roosevelt Public Papers,* Vol. 2, pp. 285-87; *New York Times* (July 13 and 14, 1933); Brayman, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[50] In truth, the Civil Service Commission was probably too anemic at the beginning of the administration to do an acceptable and rapid job of staffing the new agencies.

[51] For these various special orders, see U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1933* and *Ibid., 1934.* For outraged discussion of the soldiers' home case, see Herbert S. Hollander, *Spoils* (1936), pp. 23-28.

number in the aggregate. The special merit system provided for in the TVA statute was developed and protected, despite enormous pressure from Tennessee's arch-spoilsman, Senator Kenneth D. McKellar. Agency heads, even when not bound by the civil service rules, were not required to cooperate with Farley. The Civil Service Commission was strengthened by the appointment of commissioners who sincerely believed in merit, such as the able Professor Leonard D. White of the University of Chicago.

Once the initial "gold rush" was over, Roosevelt's strategy apparently was to preserve the balance and try to keep both the reformers and the politicians happy, while waiting for time to have its effects. Throughout most of 1934 and 1935, he continued to declare his devotion to the merit system but did little to advance it.

By the end of his first term the situation had changed. Demands for patronage were less strident, and counterpressure had been built up in professional and reform groups. Political sponsorship or clearance for appointment, when required at all, was often nominal; some congressmen gave endorsement almost as a matter of course to anyone from their home districts. The New Dealers began to think of consolidating their policy innovations, and in some of the emergency agencies, informal quasi-merit systems began to emerge. Shortly before the 1936 election, no doubt partly to forestall criticism, Roosevelt ordered some significant extensions of the merit system, and the process of consolidation proceeded rapidly in his second term.

The Transformation

The impact of the New Deal on the bureaucracy cannot be measured by the statistics of the merit system alone. A great transformation was under way. Whatever the validity of the New Dealers' initial suspicion that the bureaucracy was slow-moving, narrow, and predominantly conservative in outlook, this condition was passing rapidly by the end of Roosevelt's first term. The government was expanding in numbers and taking on new and challenging tasks. New, highly educated types had joined the Democratic politicians in Washington and were setting new standards of intelligence and devotion to public service. Unsuspected talent was being discovered in the old civil service. A new bureaucracy, enthusiastic about the New Deal and about its own expanded role in government and society, was emerging.

ADMINISTRATION AND THE PRESIDENCY

The New Deal transformation did not affect the bureaucracy alone. The Presidency as an administrative institution was also in rapid transition during the first Roosevelt years, with increasing formalization of staff arrangements. Nevertheless, given FDR's personality and operating methods, there was no danger that the office would cease to be intensely personal and political.

Hoover's White House staff had been headed by three secretaries, a literary assistant, and the Executive Clerk (still the perennial Rudolph Forster). Except for minor adjustments to new personalities, these arrangements had not changed since Harding's time. Nor did Roosevelt make significant changes, at first, in the formal machinery. Louis Howe, installed as Secretary to the President, served as personal political adviser and administrative odd-jobs man, with some specialization in party relations and patronage. Howe in full vigor might have expanded somewhat the traditional role of the presidential secretary; he was almost the only member of the administration who could badger or argue with Roosevelt with impunity. But Howe was in rapidly failing health. Beginning in 1934 he was confined to his White House bedroom much of the time, and his interventions in the presidential business became less frequent and more erratic. He was moved to a hospital in 1935 and died early in 1936. Stephen Early and Marvin MacIntyre filled familiar White House billets as secretaries for press relations and appointments. Colonel Edwin "Pa" Watson, the military aide, helped with the schedule of visitors, and "Missy" LeHand was the President's personal secretary. This staff, it should be noted, was mainly concerned with processing the papers, keeping the White House running, and serving FDR in a personal way; its activities touched substantive policy only tangentially.

Roosevelt did inherit one important institutionalized source of expert assistance in the Bureau of the Budget, which was still located in the Treasury but reported directly to the President. The bureau provided invaluable policy aid in the early days of the economy drive and, under Douglas' leadership, was drawn closer to the presidential orbit than it had been since the days of Dawes. However, the bureau's historic dedication was to saving money, and its competence was mainly in the technical details of estimates and housekeeping procedures. With the eclipse of

economy as a prime objective of the administration, the bureau's usefulness diminished somewhat.

Roosevelt apparently was less optimistic than most incoming Presidents about the potentialities of the cabinet as a policy-making or coordinating institution. There was no such talk of "a council of best minds" as was heard in the early days of Harding. The cabinet did meet regularly twice a week in the early months. Matters of common concern were discussed, occasionally a decision of some significance was arrived at (or, more likely, just announced), and the meetings served to give some initial unity to the diverse group of department heads. But from the beginning, administration policy was identified with FDR personally and might be determined in almost any context—as witness the decision to accept the Thomas amendment and go off the gold standard. Most important matters were worked out in *ad hoc* groups, and the department heads sought opportunities to take up their business with the President in private. Discussions of legislative strategy were increasingly inhibited by the presence of Vice President Garner. Cabinet meetings became occasions for exchange of political intelligence and the latest jokes, for general announcements and instructions by Roosevelt, and occasionally for ironing out minor interdepartmental conflicts. Roosevelt seemed to get some benefit and stimulation from them, but the department heads often grumbled that they were a waste of time.

From Bedside Cabinet to Executive Office

The first innovations in the way of presidential coordinating devices were completely informal. One was the "bedside cabinet." This had no fixed membership, but the top White House aides and any administration leaders who had important business pending at the moment usually met in Roosevelt's bedroom early in the morning to exchange news and coordinate their activities for the day. The second important innovation of the early months was the use of Moley, and to a lesser extent Tugwell, Berle, Frankfurter, and others, as assistants for policy development, bill drafting, legislative relations, speech preparation, and other duties touching the heart of public policy. The precedents were obscure, and the situation further confused by the variety of positions in and out of the government the individuals formally held, but this appeared to be something new in "kitchen cabinets." Seldom if ever had the roles of policy adviser and presidential assistant been combined in this way, or any indi-

vidual thrust so far into the main stream of presidential business as Moley was during the first half of 1933. The "brain trust" myth was in full flower during this period, and although Moley frequently asserted that the trust had been broken up by inauguration day, the newspapers devoted many columns to describing these rare birds and identifying the latest recruits from the academic world into the government service.

Moley publicly denied but privately seemed to enjoy his frequent designation as "Assistant President." He often talked of his subordination to the President and his expendability, but at the same time he found it increasingly difficult to live with the inconsistences and ambiguities of administration policy and to retain his equanimity when, as he felt, the President often let him down. After the debacle at London, which was partly caused by the common assumption that Moley was the President's *alter ego* on policy matters, something had to be done.

Roosevelt apparently now judged him a net liability to the administration despite the brilliant service he had rendered during the previous year and a half. A publishing venture Moley had been nurturing was now almost ripe and with only a slight nudge he resigned gracefully. For some time thereafter, he continued to be called on for occasional assistance, particularly in drafting speeches, but he gradually drifted out of Roosevelt's circle and was gone altogether by 1936.

The Moley affair did not cure Roosevelt immediately of the habit of making personal assistants out of men who were nominal subordinates of his cabinet members. Tugwell was drawn closer to the President for a time, and later there was the famous period of Corcoran and Cohen. None of these people, however, ever occupied quite the position Moley had, until Harry Hopkins moved into the White House in 1940.

Just before Moley's departure (and possibly as a result of FDR's perception of the dangers in that arrangement), the first of several experiments with formal supra-departmental machinery was launched.[52] On July 11, 1933 the Executive Council was established by executive order.[53] This was essentially the cabinet extended to include the heads of all the emergency agencies, plus Howe, Douglas, and one or two other subcabinet officers with special responsibility for recovery programs. The weekly meetings of this body replaced one of the cabinet meetings. Frank Walker, whose personality was in many ways the antithesis of Moley's, was appointed Executive Secretary. This arrangement caused no

[52] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 544-49.
[53] *Roosevelt Public Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 279-81.

particular embarrassments, but it did not solve the problem. Walker was not forceful in dealing with agency heads and had little to contribute to policy. The Council was too unwieldy to discuss serious issues or coordinate administrative activities effectively. Most of the burden still fell on the President.

In an attempt to improve on this system, Roosevelt established in November 1933 an inner group called the National Emergency Council, which consisted of the ten cabinet members and agency heads most directly concerned with economic recovery. Walker was designated Executive Director of this body.[54] The Executive Council and the Emergency Council went on side by side for several months, but the old organization gradually died on the vine, and the new one acquired additional members until it was almost as large as the old one. When Walker left the government in 1934, the two were formally consolidated as the Emergency Council under the direction of Donald Richberg.

These arrangements reached a high point of formalization under Richberg. The council meetings had agendas and minutes. The staff became a considerable bureaucracy, with several divisions at headquarters and coordinating offices in the states. While the formality and occasionally some of the reality of coordination was achieved, this organization, too, eventually lapsed into disuse and fell of its own weight. Some of its activities were absorbed in the Budget Bureau and elsewhere.

Roosevelt's experiments with presidential assistants and coordinating machinery after 1933 are not, strictly speaking, part of the transition story. They are mentioned here to show the background of experience for Roosevelt's major contribution in this respect, the Executive Office of the President, which was proposed and established during his second term.

The Personal Presidency

No amount of coordinating machinery could change the fact that FDR himself, in a highly personal way, was the center of the government. In 1933, during the period of greatest emergency, change, and growth in government functions, an incredible number of decisions were made at the President's desk. As the government continued to expand, an increasing number of matters escaped his ken, but with his curiosity, his

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 487-89.

multitudinous sources of information, and his unusual "feel" for governmental situations, he usually knew far more about his subordinates' business than they realized.

It was his personality, however, more than his knowledge of the details, that made his influence felt throughout the government. Commentators on Roosevelt have emphasized his ability to attract able men, stir their enthusiasm, and inspire them to remarkable efforts. Nor was his impact confined to his direct subordinates. Indifferent to hierarchy, he often dealt directly with officials far down in the structure, and was able to diffuse a feeling of "working for the President" through most of the vast bureaucracy.

But the diffusion of presidential influence did not necessarily produce unity. Almost, it seemed, the opposite. Roosevelt, according to Schlesinger, "had decided early that he wanted an inventive government rather than an orderly government."[55] More likely, he did not decide it in any conscious sense but chose it instinctively. At any rate, wide differences of policy continued within the administration far past the early period. Roosevelt not only had great tolerance for ambiguity but felt that there was a great deal to be gained, from a presidential viewpoint, out of competition and clash among his lieutenants. Thus he tolerated and even encouraged diversity and experimentation. His intentions were often in doubt, and most officials were uncertain of where they stood. Administrative assignments were frequently vague and conflicting. Issues were resolved only when Roosevelt himself wanted them resolved, which was usually much too late to suit his subordinates. Often he did not resolve issues at all, in any specific way, but allowed them to evaporate with the passage of time or accepted without comment the gradual result of political and bureaucratic competition and compromise.

Such administrative methods broke many of the managerial rules, permitted confusion, and were undoubtedly trying—and occasionally downright cruel—to Roosevelt's associates. But they produced a government of great vigor in an unusually critical time, and they preserved the effective power of decision in the President himself.

[55] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

CHAPTER 29

TRANSITION IN DOMESTIC CRISIS

In 1933, for the first time since the Civil War, a change of Presidents was intimately bound up with a major national crisis. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt came after three years of deepening economic depression and widening deprivation, anxiety, and public unrest. As he prepared to take office, the banks came tumbling down in an accelerating avalanche that threatened to wipe out the nation's financial institutions and paralyze the entire economic system. The transfer of presidential power became a drama with tension, conflict, tragedy, and triumphant action seldom rivaled in American politics. The situation thrust enormous responsibilities on both outgoing President Herbert Hoover and President-elect Roosevelt. At the same time, it created rare opportunities for political leadership. The Hoover-to-Roosevelt transition was a crucial event that shattered custom, established precedents, and contributed greatly to the evolving law and lore of the Presidency.

The crisis of 1933 was a convincing demonstration of the possibility of leadership breakdown in the American system, particularly under the then existing constitutional schedule for the post-election transfer of power. Even at the moment of crisis, the schedule was being changed by the pending Twentieth Amendment; one cannot help wondering what would have happened if Roosevelt had come in under the new instead of the old schedule. At any rate, the final experience under the old schedule was so disastrous that any lingering doubts about the amendment were dispelled. During the twenty years that were to elapse before the amendment was fully tested in another party overturn the American

people regarded it as an unqualified improvement, if they thought of it at all.

PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT-ELECT, AND CONGRESS

As in the two previous transitions described in this book, control of Congress had been lost by the outgoing President's party, if not fully consolidated by the opposition, at the preceding mid-term election. The emergency stimulated President Hoover and his lame duck Congress to make somewhat greater efforts to join in constructive action than were made in either 1913 or 1921. Hoover presented a comprehensive program to deal with the situation as he saw it, and some of the leading Democrats in Congress were receptive to his proposals. However, both parties in the legislature were so badly divided within themselves that Congress was beyond control by any leadership. Most of Hoover's substantive proposals were blocked or ignored, and Congress produced relatively little of its own origin. All of the appropriation bills did get through on time and in reasonably near the form recommended by the President, perhaps showing the disciplinary effect of the executive budget, which had not been operative for either Taft or Wilson. It was Hoover's insistence on a point of economy that was academic in the circumstances that brought a veto and carried one of the major bills over to the post-inaugural session. Congress ran true to previous form in refusing to confirm the outgoing President's appointments and blocking his efforts to make administrative improvements. Much legislative energy was spent on investigations, although this time the inquiries were not especially aimed at the outgoing administration; the depression was a more attractive subject.

As governmental activity slowed in Washington, President-elect Roosevelt began preparations designed to spread over the entire sixteen weeks available to him. Although he was not involved with his governorship either as intensively or as long as Wilson had been, he gave it perhaps half of his time from election day to January 2. He was not as free, nor did he begin his intensive preparations as early, as Harding. Roosevelt brushed aside the suggestion that he ought hastily to appoint his executive department heads. He was far from ready politically to make such important decisions, and one suspects that he was not anxious

to set up surrogates to exercise important powers for several weeks before he could take full charge. Roosevelt did not begin cabinet making in a serious way until he had relinquished his governorship, and it took him—just as it had taken Wilson and Harding—until the last week of February to complete the job. Composing the cabinet was apparently a complicated process of weighing, trimming, and balancing, but the job was done largely in Roosevelt's own mind. Once he had made his decisions, they stood, subject to his ability to recruit the men chosen. There was no such debate on the cabinet decisions by the President-elect's associates and the party at large as had occurred under Harding.

While Roosevelt was like Wilson in being clearly in personal command of the preparatory activity, he used a considerably larger and more diverse staff than either Wilson or Harding. During his governorship and the presidential campaign, he had developed a seasoned group of personal and political aides. FDR's major innovation, however, was in his use of Moley, Tugwell, and the other "brain trusters" as virtually full-time policy staff assistants. With such help, plus his diverse collection of personal friends and occasional advisers, he was able to draw information from a remarkable variety of sources and put in motion preparations for legislation or administrative action across most of the broad front of governmental policy. Some of Roosevelt's legislative planning followed the Wilsonian technique of working with legislative leaders and building on their efforts. The economy act, for example, grew out of the previous activities of Representative Lewis Douglas, and the TVA act was a broadened version of earlier bills by Senator Norris. In other cases, however, such as the AAA and the securities legislation, the planning and even the bill-drafting was done under Roosevelt's auspices with little direct congressional involvement until the bills were introduced.

The code of constitutional politeness governing the relations of the President-elect and Congress broke down somewhat under the pressure of the situation, and Roosevelt became more deeply involved than either Wilson or Harding with the lame duck Congress. The results were a fair measure of the influence a President-elect could exert, preceding the Twentieth Amendment, in the post-election period. A farm bill, which Roosevelt wanted badly, was not passed because a powerful committee chairman saw no reason to hasten to accommodate a President who was not yet on the scene. The proprieties of the situation and his inability to

take personal command put Roosevelt in a position of weakness from which he dared not risk an all-out campaign. However, Roosevelt's disapproval was enough to stop action on such matters as a sales tax, the first repeal resolution, and probably a bank deposit guarantee program. He could not get legislation passed, except possibly at an intolerable political cost, but he had effective informal veto power.

HOOVER AND ROOSEVELT

The relations between Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt in the period from November to March have always fascinated historians and agitated partisans of the two men. The episodes have been described at some length in previous chapters, not necessarily to evaluate the conduct of the two, but mainly to illustrate persistent behavioral tendencies of Presidents and Presidents-elect and to indicate the contribution of this experience to expectations about subsequent transitions.

Hoover's invitation to his successor for advance consultations at the White House was an act of great significance, both for the precedent established and the alternatives implicitly rejected. The idea that an outgoing President might turn over the office to his successor shortly after election day through the workings of the presidential succession act had been discussed intermittently in political circles at least since Wilson's day. Now, if ever, the national situation would have justified such a drastic course of action. But Hoover apparently did not give it serious consideration, and it is highly unlikely that Roosevelt would have agreed had Hoover proposed it.

Hoover and his associates lost no time, however, in deciding that the President-elect should be directly consulted. Letting the situation drift, or counting on haphazard liaison between subordinate officials and the President-elect (as had occurred in previous party overturns) was unthinkable in the circumstances. When Hoover opened communication with Roosevelt, it also was significant that he did so on the public record and that he proposed an overt meeting at the White House. Quite possibly Roosevelt would have preferred some exploratory exchanges in complete confidence. But the idea of the President and his successor talking things over appeared to the public as such a sensible, patriotic thing to do that Roosevelt had little choice but to accept the invitation to the

White House, even though he felt that he was being "put on the spot." The conference marked the end of a long-decaying convention that Presidents and Presidents-elect of different parties should overlook each others' existence until inauguration day, and established a powerful precedent for such meetings in future transitions.

The difficulty Hoover and Roosevelt had in finding common ground on the war debts and other international issues illustrates some of the problems of relationships between Presidents and Presidents-elect. Hoover was well informed while Roosevelt was not—or felt that he was not. A briefing by a recent political opponent, no matter how thoroughly and conscientiously done, is unlikely to leave a President-elect, who has not given much previous thought to the problem, with enough of a "feel" of the situation that he will be willing to make commitments.[1] Hoover, being the man to whom the foreign governments directed their appeals, naturally felt the pressure for answers that would be in a measure responsive. Having lived intimately with the debt problem for a long time, he also was sensitive to the values of consistency and continuity. Roosevelt's points of reference were in his own party and the criticisms leveled at Hoover during the campaign. No wonder, then, that Hoover pressed for cooperation and joint action while Roosevelt remained evasive. Roosevelt's instinctive caution was encouraged by advisers displaying a natural tendency to protect the chief—and their own positions—from corrupting outside influences.

To President Hoover, the facts about the war debts and the World Economic Conference were so plain that a reasonable man could hardly fail to see the appropriateness of the course he recommended; if Roosevelt failed to cooperate, it was because he either did not understand the facts or was deliberately being destructive and irresponsible. But to Roosevelt, starting with different assumptions about economic policy, the facts did not necessarily lead to Hoover's conclusion. To him, the salient fact was that Hoover was asking him to plow head-on into a thick wall of congressional opposition on the debt issue, thereby risking

[1] Jay Pierrepont Moffat, the State Department official whose diary has been quoted several times in connection with the Hoover-Roosevelt transition, noted on this point: "What apparently struck Hoover and Mills was his [Roosevelt's] ignorance of the general problems facing the administration, particularly in the foreign field. What apparently struck him was that Hoover and Mills, who had been working and struggling with these problems for years, should expect him to have well-defined ideas and policies on them before he and his advisers had a chance to make a careful study based on official information." Nancy Harvison Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (1956), p. 77.

the alienation of a significant element of his political support before he even arrived in the White House. Roosevelt later would take such chances, but only after first-hand reconnoitering showed him that there were no suitable alternatives and that the goal was worth the calculated risk. He rejected Hoover's contention that patriotism and responsibility required him to make what he regarded as a blind commitment.

The amount of cooperation that eventually was achieved on foreign affairs should not be minimized. The Hoover-Roosevelt conferences and subsequent statements indicated continuity of policy on at least some aspects of the economic situation. Stimson's conferences with Roosevelt, and later with Hull, gave the incoming administration valuable informamation on a variety of points. Eventually, Roosevelt explicitly backed the administration's position on two matters that he judged with confidence not to be politically explosive. But on the war debts and related issues he refused to make joint proposals to Congress or even to establish machinery that might imply commitments to directions he was not certain he wanted to go. By accepting information and asserting that he wanted no commitments made, he effectively prevented Hoover from acting and froze the situation until after inauguration.

The Hoover-Roosevelt stalemate over the banking crisis, although understandable in view of the circumstances and the habits of mind of the two men, permitted the nation to drift to the brink of disaster. Preoccupied with other matters, Roosevelt undoubtedly was slow to awaken to the seriousness of the banking situation. Failing to display that largeness of spirit expected of a gentleman in victory, he was inclined, in the phrase of a later day, to let Hoover "sweat it out." Even though he sincerely believed that nothing he could do would do much good, his delay in answering Hoover's mid-January confidential letter was hardly excusable. He was the more vulnerable because on its face the Hoover letter merely asked him to affirm statements he had made during the campaign.

Yet Roosevelt's answer to Hoover's appeal could scarcely have been anything but negative. Since the campaign, his ideas on the money issue had been changing rapidly, and it was increasingly unlikely that it would be possible to balance the budget. Hoover's letter was not an invitation to search for common ground, but rather an unequivocal demand for support of his own position. Hoover realized that he was asking Roosevelt for more than harmless affirmation of campaign pledges, as indicated by his statements to others that the sort of declaration requested would

be a ratification of "the whole major program of the Republican Administration" and meant "the abandonment of 90 per cent of the so-called new deal." Assuming Hoover's good intentions in the matter, the nature of his request revealed how completely he was the prisoner of his own doctrines, and his approach to Roosevelt and the other leading Democrats showed incredible political ineptitude. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Hoover, whether or not he realized it at the time, was more concerned about getting his position clearly on the historical record than in enlisting Roosevelt's cooperation in a joint course of action.[2]

In the last desperate hours of Hoover's term, the conduct of both President and President-elect left something to be desired. Granting the legitimacy of FDR's wish to make his entrance on the presidential stage as dramatic and unencumbered as possible, it remained a feeble justification for his refusal to assure Hoover of support for a proclamation restricting bank withdrawals, especially since he intended himself to do the same thing—and more—two days later. But here again, Hoover's take-it-or-leave-it approach repelled cooperation. His final ordeal was a demonstration of the constitutional truth that the incumbent must bear the responsibility to the end of his term for acting or not acting in extremities, regardless of his political weakness.

LEADERSHIP AT HOME AND ABROAD

Roosevelt's boldness in policy leadership when he assumed the Presidency stood in sharp contrast to his caution during the preparatory period. The boldness, to be sure, was not quite all that it appeared to be; beneath the surface there were probes and occasional cautious withdrawals. But the rapid-fire successes of Roosevelt's first two weeks in office seemed to propel him through the barrier of normal political inhibitions and restraints into a realm where for the time being he could freely display his virtuosity of leadership. The national scene was chaotic, other centers of power had been reduced, and the people were

[2] "It is notable that the dying Administration, which made such a parade of its efforts to co-operate with the victors, defined co-operation as acceptance and endorsement of the Hoover policies. President Hoover did not ask Mr. Roosevelt how the Republicans could get the New Deal started for him. Yet that, too, would have been co-operation!" Harris Gaylord Warren, *Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression* (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 270.

applauding; Roosevelt drew on the accumulated capital of twenty years in public life and made the most of the situation. Issues that had been dividing his party for years were quickly forced to a decision, for better or for worse. From a multitude of sources, the first New Deal legislation was assembled and put through. Yet it is important to note how quickly, despite the apparent freedom FDR had at the outset, the situation closed in on him. After the first six weeks, he was maneuvering within rapidly narrowing tolerances, and after fourteen weeks Congress rallied on legislatively sacred soil—pension politics—to deliver a rebuff. The conditions of March 1933 may never be repeated, but Roosevelt's example in moving rapidly at the opening of his term when his position was strongest stands as a suggestion to all of his successors.

The accomplishments of the special session of Congress in the spring of 1933 were facilitated both by the efforts of many individual legislators and by a mild intra-party revolution that produced an accommodating leadership in the House of Representatives. This latter event was somewhat reminiscent of events in the Senate on the eve of Wilson's assumption of power. While Roosevelt, like Wilson, was not visibly involved in these matters, he outdid Wilson in the sophistication with which he played the party leadership role and used it to strengthen his policy position. On the one hand, Roosevelt was the unabashed partisan leader. He displayed keen interest in party organization affairs, permitted Farley to double as Postmaster General and National Chairman, and used the patronage to strengthen his control of the party and extract support for his measures in Congress. On the other hand, his partisanship was rarely narrow and spiteful but rather benevolent and inclusive. In legislative matters in particular, he sought the support of the progressive Republicans and made concessions in order to hold them. Most of the time he presented himself to the public as the national leader beyond party considerations.

Roosevelt set out to conduct the nation's foreign affairs with the same personal touch he used in domestic politics. It was easy for him to capture world attention, but he found many matters unyielding to his efforts. His attempt to assert leadership in international disarmament was checked by the intractability of the world situation and by the isolationism of Congress. Despite the caution with which he had first approached international economic matters, he allowed himself to drift into a position where an internal policy conflict could not be resolved without embarrassment before the world and keen disappointment to

some of his supporters. When the issue was presented sharply, the domestic interest—both political and economic—came first. There was probably little real possibility of constructive accomplishment at the World Economic Conference, but American mismanagement contributed greatly to its failure.

THE NEW DEAL AND THE BUREAUCRACY

The election of Roosevelt transferred political control of a stable bureaucracy that was beginning to show the effects of careerism from its lower to its upper reaches. One would like to know more about the role of the civil service in the policy crisis of 1932-33 and the subsequent rapid unfolding of new programs. On the surface, its participation was mostly passive and subordinate. Political appointees of the Hoover administration spoke for the departments on the eve of the turnover, and Roosevelt's post-inaugural appointees appeared to spark the New Deal innovations. The ethos of the civil service was clerical and technical.

Yet there were a few areas of policy development where the new political leaders apparently used career men to help shape the alternatives, advise on the feasibility of proposals, and supply the knowledge necessary to get programs under way rapidly. The course of action proposed by Woodin in the banking crisis was largely based on the advice of holdover political officers and civil servants at the Treasury, and this same group had great responsibility and discretion in putting the emergency banking act into effect. Excepting the areas that Roosevelt took under his personal charge, the activities of the State Department were primarily guided by careerists who had reached policy-making levels. Lewis Douglas' economy program both reflected the technical work of a generation of staff specialists inside and outside of government and demonstrated the potentialities of the executive budget as an instrument of presidential control. Wallace, Tugwell, and their cohorts tapped previously unexploited policy resources at the Department of Agriculture. And it is a reasonable assumption that the CCC could spring into action with such rapidity because it drew on the capabilities of three of the federal governments's oldest and most stable special bureaucracies—the Army, the Forest Service, and the Park Service.

These, however, were tendencies mainly indicative of the future. The

dominant fact at the time was that the incoming Democrats regarded the civil service with great suspicion, drew most of their policy advice from outside the government, made many personnel changes at all levels, and virtually swamped the old bureaucracy with appointees brought in through new, civil service exempt, programs. The economy program resulted in the sacrifice of several thousand individual civil servants and the effectiveness of many government operations for an objective that the administration itself soon abandoned. The possibility of using an economy campaign as a partisan purge also was noted, if not completely exploited. Had it not been for the appointing opportunities in the new agencies, the civil service would probably have suffered serious permanent damage, but the quick change from a policy of contraction to one of expansion in the summer of 1933 provided an outlet for the unprecedented pressure for party patronage. Nevertheless, the fears of civil service reformers that all the progress made since Theodore Roosevelt's time was being wiped out were hardly justified. The conditions of the depression years and the lure of the New Deal programs had attracted people with training and ability seldom previously found in government employment, and the imperatives of operating big government provided irresistible impulses to some sort of merit system. Roosevelt's second term saw the reintegration of the career bureaucracy at a higher level of competence and responsibility than ever before.

The political forces struggling over the civil service and the patronage resembled those of the overturns of 1913 and 1921. The main drive for patronage came from party organization leaders and congressmen. Some of the top executive officials were oriented from the beginning to management through the career service, while others took a highly partisan approach. As time went by, the influence of the former group increased at the expense of the latter. President Roosevelt paralleled Wilson in believing personally in the merit system but tolerating enlargement of patronage during his early months in the White House for the sake of party harmony and his legislative program.

The New Deal expansion of governmental activities and proliferation of agencies brought a rapid increase in the burdens of the Presidency. Never before had a Chief Executive received so much mail, seen so many people, or made so many decisions. Roosevelt realized from the beginning that the task was too great to do with the sort of assistance available to his predecessors. While he remained ever personal and

changeable in his administrative habits, he began a series of experiments with presidential staff that eventually culminated in the Executive Office of the President.

FDR AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HERITAGE

Finally, there remains to be emphasized the place of FDR in the leadership tradition of the Democratic party. From Theodore Roosevelt and from Wilson he had learned that the President must be a strong leader of his administration, his party, the Congress, and the nation—and the entire world, if need be. His conduct was a striking change from the whiggery of the Republican Presidents who followed Wilson.

While fully conscious of the Wilsonian heritage, Roosevelt was not doctrinaire. From his personality and practice, new dimensions of flexibility, versatility, and humor were added to the Presidency. Roosevelt changed and enlarged the office in ways that no successor, of any party, will ever undo. He directly confirmed and strengthened the tradition of presidential leadership within his own party, and may indirectly have encouraged the preservation of contrary doctrines among Republicans.

PART FIVE

THE TRUMAN-EISENHOWER TRANSITION, 1952-1953

"If a man is acquainted with what other people have experienced at this desk it will be easier for him to go through a similar experience. It is ignorance that causes most mistakes. The man who sits here ought to know his American history, at least."

—HARRY S. TRUMAN

CHAPTER 30

REPUBLICAN RESTORATION

About two o'clock in the morning of November 5, 1952, General Dwight D. Eisenhower addressed a jubilant crowd in the ballroom of the Hotel Commodore in New York City:

> May I ask your attention one moment. I am not certain, my friends, whether or not you have read or heard the telegram that Mr. Stevenson just sent me. It reads:
>
> "The people have made their choice and I congratulate you. That you may be the servant and guardian of peace and make the dale of trouble a door of hope is my earnest prayer. Best wishes. Adlai Stevenson"
>
> Just as I came down to the ballroom I replied . . . as follows:
>
> "I thank you for your courteous and generous message. Recognizing the intensity of the difficulties that lie ahead, it is clearly necessary that men and women of goodwill of both parties forget the political strife through which we have passed and devote themselves to the single purpose of a better future. This I believe they will do."
>
> Signed with my name.
>
> Now, my friends, it is trite to say that this is a day of dedication rather than of triumph. . . .[1]

As he stepped down from the platform the Secret Service detail closed in around the President-elect.

Out in Springfield, Illinois, reporters asked Stevenson how he felt. Stevenson quoted Lincoln's comment on a lost election: "He said he felt like a little boy who had stubbed his toe in the dark. He said he was too old to cry but it hurt too much to laugh."[2]

[1] *New York Times* (Nov. 6, 1952).
[2] *Ibid.*

The Democrats were hurting almost everywhere that night. Eisenhower had carried 39 states—all of the North, Midwest, West, and even part of the South. His popular vote of just under 34 million, compared to Stevenson's 27 million, converted to an electoral vote of 442-89. Congress also was going Republican by a narrow margin, bringing the GOP control of both the Presidency and Congress for the first time in twenty years.

While the congratulations and acknowledgements were being exchanged, President Harry S. Truman was already asleep on the train carrying him back to Washington from Independence, Missouri. The early returns had told him enough. But the President was up early the next morning to begin a job he had thought about a great deal in the past few months. From Martinsburg, West Virginia, he dispatched a telegram to President-elect Eisenhower:

> Congratulations on your overwhelming victory. The 1954 budget must be presented to the Congress before January 15th. All the preliminary figures have been made up. You should have a representative meet with the Director of the Bureau of the Budget immediately. The Independence will be at your disposal if you still desire to go to Korea.
>
> Harry S. Truman

On this sharp note, the change of administrations was under way.[3]

A DELICATE SITUATION

A brisk beginning was justified, however, because a period of uncertainty and danger lay ahead. For the next seventy-five days, at a critical moment in history, the United States government would be in the care of a repudiated administration.

Since the electoral miracle of 1948, President Truman had been perched on a narrow, crumbling ledge of power. Congress, despite small Democratic majorities in both houses, had spurned most of his domestic program, a set of proposals usually called the Fair Deal. By plain speaking and persistent appeals for bipartisan effort in the face of external danger, Truman had mustered support for a series of steps in the international field: aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, and resistance to communist aggression in Korea. How-

[3] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs,* Vol. 2 (1956), pp. 504-05, © 1956, Time, Inc.

ever, increasing resistance and criticism of his administration had narrowed his room for maneuver. While stubbornly defending the executive branch against persistent legislative pressure and attacks, Truman had not acted drastically enough to satisfy his critics on the issues of corruption and communist influence in the government. Conservative resentment of twenty years of ever-bigger government was intensified by the economic controls, big budgets, and higher taxes required by rearmament and the Korean War.

Although legally eligible for another term, Truman had removed himself from consideration early in 1952 and urged the nomination of the reluctant Governor Stevenson. After the convention, with Stevenson squirming slightly in his political embrace, the President had waded into the campaign and attacked Eisenhower. The Republicans, in turn, had campaigned more against Truman and the bureaucracy than against Stevenson. Thus the administration was effectively repudiated. After the election, there was enough residual authority in the Presidency to keep the lines from going completely slack inside the executive branch, but the administration's influence with Congress and the public was at low ebb and its ability to make international commitments limited.

For the next several weeks the security of the United States, already in danger after five years of cold war tension, would be in even greater jeopardy. America and its allies confronted the Soviet bloc on political, military, economic, and propaganda fronts around the globe. In Korea, where American troops fought under United Nations authority against the forces of North Korea and Communist China, the military action had settled down to a dreary stalemate along the 38th parallel. Armistice talks at Panmunjom were snagged on the issue of forcible repatriation of prisoners. All-out war with Russia, while not momentarily threatening, was an ever-present possibility. Only some new incident or a desperate gambling decision in the Kremlin was needed to start the planes with atomic bombs. The chance that the confusion of a political overturn and change of administrations in the United States might be seized as an opportunity could not be completely discounted.

Meanwhile the American economy operated under forced draft to supply both the civilian demands of the booming fifties and the military requirements of the Korean war and related arms build-up. Prices, wages, and scarce materials were under federal government control. Completely aside from this control, government and the economy were linked in a

thousand ways; prosperity, economic stability, and the daily lives of citizens depended on governmental action and decision to an extent hardly dreamed of at the time of the last party overturn in 1933.

The immensity of the stakes and the dangers of fumbling called for serious efforts to maintain governmental continuity and readiness for prompt, responsible decisions through the transition period. But what should be done? It had been so long since the last party overturn that the past provided only partial guides to action. What could be recalled of 1933 and the difficulties between Hoover and Roosevelt was hardly reassuring.

The uncertainty of the future was enhanced by the institutional changes that had occurred since 1933. The most obvious fact was the enormous growth in size and complexity of the federal government. President Truman stood at the head of a civilian bureaucracy of about 2½ million people, a fourfold increase since Hoover's time, not to mention about 3½ million men under arms. Federal expenditures had jumped from $5 billion to about $75 billion annually. Instead of a presidential staff of about 40 people, there were over 200 employees in the White House proper, plus about 1,100 in other units of the Executive Office of the President such as the Bureau of the Budget, the National Security Resources Board, the National Security Council, and the Council of Economic Advisers. There had been a corresponding increase in the complexity of top management in the executive departments and agencies. How long would it take for a new President and his associates to learn about this machinery? The ponderous bureaucracy itself had been an issue in the campaign. Could it now be transferred to new leaders without, on the one hand, tearing it apart and destroying the government's capacity for effective action, or, on the other hand, leaving the new leaders the virtual captives of the bureaucracy for a long period?

The constitutional and legal framework for the transition also had changed since the last time. The Twentieth Amendment had put an end to lame duck Congresses and moved up presidential inauguration day from March 4 to January 20. The new schedule had created no problems when an incumbent President was re-elected, but now there was a scheduled change of Presidents for the first time since 1933. The new timing meant a shorter interregnum, which presumably was beneficial, but it also cut the amount of time available for the incoming and outgoing administrations to make the necessary preparations. Truman would

not have to contend with a lame duck Congress, nor would Eisenhower have to call a special session; the new Congress would convene on January 3 and be waiting on inauguration day. But those seventeen days between convening and January 20 normally saw the beginning of the annual legislative cycle with the submission of the President's State of the Union message and legislative program, budget, and economic report. If Truman made these presentations as usual, would Eisenhower find himself unduly restricted after January 20? Alternatively, was it feasible somehow to wait until Eisenhower could assume responsibility for them? Truman's reference to the budget in his telegram to General Eisenhower on the morning after election reflected his anxiousness to come to grips with these questions. Less obvious at the moment, but more important in the long run, was the broader question of the effect of the new timing on the relative positions of the new President and Congress. Would facing a regular rather than a special session facilitate, or impede, the new President's ability to launch his program?

MISTY PROSPECTS

The answers to some of these questions depended on the extent of the changes in policy, personnel, and organization the President-elect intended to make. As usual, the campaign had not ended in complete clarity.

Eisenhower's orientation was perhaps clearest with respect to foreign policy. There was little doubt that he would stay on the main line of post-World War II policy and continue to resist Soviet expansion. This presumably included American military preparedness, continued efforts to build and maintain a coalition of free peoples, and standing ready to fight in the event of Soviet attack on Europe or other areas regarded as vital to the United States. But Eisenhower and the Republicans had set themselves off from Truman in various ways. They had suggested a need to be firmer, both with the communists and with other nations that might be wavering in their determination to resist Soviet influence. John Foster Dulles, who was considered likely to become Secretary of State, had suggested the possibility of liberation to the Soviet-dominated peoples of Eastern Europe—a notion that brought shudders to Western European allies fearful of rash American ventures that might precipitate general war.

Concerning the Far East, Eisenhower had joined in the long-standing Republican accusation that Truman had carelessly allowed China to be "lost" to the free world—perhaps through communist connivance inside the administration—and had blundered into the Korean War. While not criticizing the ultimate decision to fight in Korea, Eisenhower had appealed to the increasing public restlessness over American involvement and sacrifice of lives in Asia. He asserted that the war must somehow be brought to a satisfactory end and proposed, if he were elected, to go to Korea and investigate the situation first-hand—a promise that Truman considered a cheap theatrical trick.

It was not clear whether Eisenhower intended to break the armistice negotiation stalemate by diplomatic skill beyond the capacity of the Truman administration, by making greater concessions, or by increasing the military effort against Communist China. The Truman administration, with the strong support of the United Nations allies, had followed a policy of keeping the war localized in Korea. While Eisenhower was thought to lean the same way, a substantial element of the Republican party, including such leaders as Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, Senator William F. Knowland of California, and the many admirers of the deposed General Douglas MacArthur, urged a more active policy—such measures as bombing Chinese "sanctuaries" across the Yalu border, a naval blockade of the Chinese coast, and direct support of a return to the mainland by the Nationalist army of General Chiang Kai-shek. Eisenhower would have to find foreign policies for both Europe and Asia that would keep appropriate pressure on the communists while avoiding general war, and satisfy the more aggressive elements of his domestic support without shattering the Western alliance.

Candidate Eisenhower had stood for time-honored Republican principles of domestic policy—reduced expenditures, lower taxes, balanced budgets, and a sound dollar. While promising to maintain prosperity and preserve the principal social welfare gains of the past twenty years, he had also promised to liberate farmers, businessmen, and ordinary citizens from the subsidies, regulations, and restraints of big government. While promising civil servants that there would be no mass firings, he had declared his intention to "clean up the mess" of corruption and communism in Washington, rid the government of bad leaders, and reorganize it on a businesslike basis. He also had pledged a return to constitutional principles by stopping federal encroachment on the states and executive encroachment on the sphere of Congress.

Most of these declarations were general in nature and susceptible to various interpretations, which now raised questions about how fast and how far Eisenhower intended to move. Some observers expected few significant changes—essentially a tightened up version of the status quo. Most Eisenhower supporters seemed to anticipate a return to fiscal conservatism and various measures to restore confidence in the executive branch but no basic changes in the role of the government in society and the economy. However, Eisenhower also had bid for the support of the more radical Republicans who, as Joseph Alsop said, wanted to "row back up the river of time" and slash expenditures to the bone, reduce and thoroughly purge the bureaucracy, erase all evidences of the New and Fair Deals, and return to the pure Republicanism of the Hoover era or before. Eisenhower's postconvention understanding of Morningside Heights with his erstwhile opponent, Senator Taft, was a formal commitment to a conservative domestic policy and a guarantee that "Mr. Republican" and his supporters would not be excluded from influence. The candidate's refusal to repudiate Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin and other extremists on the communists-in-government issue raised additional doubts about his liberalism. Nevertheless, the prevailing view was that Eisenhower was essentially a middle-of-the-roader who would, eventually if not immediately, use his influence to curb and re-educate the Republican right wing.

IKE

Whatever his intentions, the American people had enormous confidence in their President-elect; compared to Eisenhower, Franklin D. Roosevelt at the comparable moment had been unknown and untrusted. Republicans hailed the man who had led them to victory after twenty years in the wilderness, and the more astute among them recognized his potential domination of the party. The Eisenhower popular vote in comparison with the vote for Republican congressional candidates indicated a personal rather than a party victory. Indeed, the key to Eisenhower's success seemed to be his ability to stand above party and appeal to all sections and classes. He had been a powerful catalyst for the energies of all who were antagonized, uneasy, or simply apathetic after twenty years of Democratic control. Yet there was remarkably little post-election rancor. Most Democrats found it easy to be philosophical about

the inevitability of political change as long as "Ike" was going to be in charge.

The essential fact was that the American people liked Ike and felt that they had known him for a long time.[4] It was more than a decade since he had been catapulted from the obscurity of an army career and sent to command the allied forces in Europe. He had emerged as the leading American hero of World War II, his name and image familiar in every household. Serving as Army Chief of Staff after the war, as President of Columbia University, and then (on leave from Columbia) as supreme commander of the forces under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, he was perhaps the most respected American of his generation. During those years his political party preference remained unknown. In foreign affairs he was an avowed internationalist; in the realm of domestic policy his recorded views showed no clear pattern but seemed predominantly conservative. But what he said made little difference to the public. He was perceived as a latter-day George Washington —patriotic, able, unpretentious, experienced in large endeavors, and above narrow partisanship.

Courted by admirers and would-be kingmakers in both parties, Eisenhower's statements of political unavailability gradually became weaker as he observed the increasing bitterness of the strife of American politics and contemplated the possibility of either another four years of Truman or his succession by a conservative and isolationist, such as Senator Taft. Finally, early in 1952, Eisenhower asserted his Republicanism and declared his availability. An organization rapidly took shape, spearheaded by the professionals of the Thomas E. Dewey wing of the Republican party, liberally financed by businessmen, and strongly backed by publicity resources from the newspaper, magazine, advertising, and entertainment industries. The General resigned from the army and threw himself into politics with the same enthusiasm that had brought him success in previous situations. In a sharp engagement, culminating at the Republican National Convention at Chicago, Eisenhower was nominated.

In the campaign that followed, it was the witty Stevenson who won the debating points, but Ike, the popular hero, who thrilled the crowds. Democratic efforts to cast doubt on his qualifications for the Presidency

[4] An admiring account of Eisenhower's life and views up to his entry in the campaign is Kevin McCann, *Man From Abilene* (1952). A more recent and critical, although not wholly unsympathetic, view is Marquis Childs, *Eisenhower: Captive Hero* (1958).

and raise fears about generals in the White House failed almost completely. This was Ike, the peace-loving general. True, he had spent almost all of his adult life in the army, had lived many years abroad, and had never run for office, attended a caucus, swung a precinct, or even rung a political doorbell. But his nickname, grin, personal attractiveness, and well-publicized roots in Abilene seemed to mark him as a true American type. In the opinion climate of 1952, it was an advantage not to be identified as an "ordinary politician." At the same time he was a symbol of leadership. In Washington and in international circles he had moved at top levels, and his experience in the military-diplomatic world of high command seemed suited for the major problems facing the nation. His obvious unfamiliarity with most issues of domestic policy did not count against him; his assertions of belief in the good old American ideals of thrift, self-reliance, and equality of opportunity were reassuring, and he could always get expert advice on the details. Eisenhower's statements about the need for teamwork in the executive branch and a working partnership with Congress made sense to most people and were what frustrated Republican congressmen wanted to hear. Such talk was largely overlooked or dismissed as campaign oratory by reporters, bureaucrats, and others who took for granted the necessity for vigorous policy leadership from the White House.

STAFF FOR THE GENERAL

Eisenhower may have felt a certain uneasiness on his post-election pinnacle, but he was far from alone. Well financed and staffed from the beginning, his organization had snowballed as it rolled on to victory. To assist him in pre-inaugural preparations he had an aggregation of assistants and advisers far more formidable than the one possessed by Roosevelt in November 1932. The President-elect's personal staff at the Commodore numbered about one hundred people, and this was only a fraction of the resources available to him.

Relationships were not altogether clear among the various categories of regular and volunteer staff members, advisers, and friends, but the man who had stood at Eisenhower's right hand during most of the campaign was Governor Sherman Adams of New Hampshire. Adams had been one of the earliest Eisenhower-for-President promoters,

sponsoring the slate in the New Hampshire primary that eventually brought the General to declare his availability. He later became floor manager of the Eisenhower forces at the Republican convention. A taciturn Yankee often described as a modern Coolidge, Adams had been chosen to head the staff of the campaign train and impressed Eisenhower by his organizational ability, capacity for hard work, and willingness to assume responsibility.

The President-elect's leading adviser on political strategy, organization, and personnel was Herbert Brownell, Jr. A lawyer and experienced politician, Brownell had served as Dewey's campaign manager in 1944 and 1948. He was now the principal link between Eisenhower and the former titular leader of the party, who had from the beginning lent his advice, support, and prestige to the Eisenhower movement but remained personally in the background. Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., son of the former senator from Michigan, had been in charge of Eisenhower's headquarters at the Commodore while the General was out campaigning. Eisenhower's press secretary, James C. Hagerty, had served Dewey in a similar capacity. So had Dr. Gabriel Hauge, who provided economic advice and directed research activities. C. D. Jackson and Emmett J. Hughes, the principal speech writers, were connected with the Luce publications in New York. Eisenhower's appointments and other arrangements were handled by Thomas E. Stephens, a New York lawyer and former supporter of Dewey. There were several aides who had followed Eisenhower from NATO, and others who had joined the movement along the way.

In addition to Eisenhower's personal staff at the Commodore, the resources of two major campaign organizations were at his disposal. One was the Republican National Committee, which maintained the official party campaign headquarters in Washington. It was headed by Arthur E. Summerfield, former state chairman of Michigan, who had become national chairman after the Chicago convention. There was also the Citizens for Eisenhower and Nixon, a nationwide network of volunteers, independents and come-lately Republicans, with headquarters in New York. Walter Williams, a Seattle businessman, headed the "Citizens." This organization was loosely connected at the top with the National Committee, along with regional, professional, minority, and other special groups.

Several members of the Senate who had been early Eisenhower sup-

porters were prominent around the headquarters. One of these was Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts (grandson of Wilson's nemesis) who had been the formal leader of the Eisenhower preconvention campaign. Lodge had lost a close race to John F. Kennedy for re-election to the Senate and was now available for service to Eisenhower on a full-time basis. Other senators close to the President-elect were James Duff of Pennsylvania, Fred Seaton of Nebraska, and Frank Carlson from Eisenhower's original home state of Kansas.

As far as policy was concerned, Eisenhower had a wide collection of personal friends and advisers who were probably more influential than the political professionals and others on his regular staff. In a special status was his brother, Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower, president of Pennsylvania State University and widely experienced in government service. The principal adviser on foreign affairs was John Foster Dulles, a New York lawyer who had been the main link between the Dewey Republicans and the Department of State for several years; Dulles was the principal author of the foreign affairs plank of the Republican platform. General Lucius Clay, postwar military governor of Germany, who had retired from the Army to become chairman of the board of Continental Can Co., provided an important link to business. Other occasional advisers with wide backgrounds in business, government, and international affairs included former Marshall Plan administrator Paul G. Hoffman, John J. McCloy, John Hay Whitney, and Nelson A. Rockefeller. These were only a few of the most prominent sources of advice and assistance. The resources of *Time-Life-Fortune,* several universities and independent research organizations, and many of the country's top-drawer business corporations, law firms, consulting organizations, and advertising agencies flowed into the Commodore through various pipelines. In such organizations many memoranda of advice for the new administration had long since been set in motion, "just in case." From all evidence, one of the problems around the headquarters was a surplus of volunteers too eminent to be ignored.

FACING RESPONSIBILITY

President-elect Eisenhower and his staff moved quickly to face their new responsibilities on the morning after election. Only five hours after victory had been conceded, an Eisenhower message of friendship was

transmitted to the people of France, apparently intended to soothe European concern over the prospective change of administrations. Later that morning, President Truman's blunt telegram was received at the Commodore. Eisenhower, already angry at Truman's campaign tactics, was further infuriated by his dig "if you still intend to go to Korea." However, he responded promptly, in a contrasting tone that could hardly escape notice:

> I deeply appreciate your courteous and generous telegram. I shall try to make arrangements within the next two or three days to have a personal representative to sit with the Director of the Budget. I am most appreciative of your offer of the use of the Independence but assure you that any suitable transport plane that one of the services could make available will be satisfactory for my planned trip to Korea. With your permission I shall give the Secretary of Defense the earliest possible notice of my proposed date of departure.
>
> Dwight D. Eisenhower[5]

But the President-elect needed to rest. Leaving Adams, Brownell, and others canvassing prospects for the cabinet, he gathered his family and several personal friends and flew to Augusta, Georgia, to spend a few days at the National Golf Club.

[5] *New York Times,* (Nov. 6, 1952).

CHAPTER 31

TOWARD AN ORDERLY TRANSITION

President Truman's post-election telegram opening the question of transition arrangements with President-elect Eisenhower was unexpectedly prompt and abrupt in tone, but the act itself caused no great surprise in Washington officialdom. Actually, the approach to the President-elect had been planned months in advance as part of a general policy of the administration for dealing with its successor. While there had been no scheduled change of Presidents since 1933, several lines of thought and experience in the intervening years had led to an awareness of the transition problem in some governmental circles and gave at least partial guidance to action.

As a legacy of the New Deal and World War II, the Truman administration commanded the services of a large number of able and experienced officials in the upper reaches of the federal departments and agencies. Many of these officials, both civil servants and political appointees, regarded themselves as professional managers of government; they had strong loyalties to their respective agencies and to the executive branch as a whole, regardless of whatever personal commitments they might have to the political fortune or specific policies of the Truman administration. In such circles there had long lurked the realization that transferring political control of an organization as large and complex as the government had become would some day be a challenging task. Veteran bureaucrats had often speculated with almost clinical detachment about how a change of administration might be handled.

A second body of experience in the background of the Truman-

Eisenhower transition was the long effort of the war and postwar years to maintain national unity and a bipartisan approach to defense and foreign policy. Both Roosevelt and Truman had appointed Republicans to cabinet positions in this area. Such Republican congressional spokesmen as Senator Arthur Vandenberg were taken into the administration's confidence, consulted on policy, and included in delegations to international conferences. During and after the campaign of 1944, Secretary of State Hull had reached understandings with the Republican candidate and titular leader, Governor Dewey (largely through the latter's designated representative, John Foster Dulles), which restrained partisan debate about the negotiations leading to the founding of the United Nations.[1]

A third important factor in 1952 was the attitude of President Truman. Vivid in Truman's memory was his own experience in 1945 when he had been thrust suddenly into the Presidency, required to make vital decisions promptly, and found it extremely difficult to acquire the necessary background information. An avid reader of history, Truman was familiar with the growth of the Presidency as a governmental institution. The longer he remained in the office, the more concerned he became for maintaining its constitutional integrity and operational effectiveness, and the greater became his feeling of kinship with all Presidents, past and future. Despite his intense partisanship, he was determined to give a fair start to his successor, whoever he might be, and to rectify what he later called the ". . . omission in our political tradition that a retiring President did not make it his business to facilitate the transfer of the government to his successor."[2]

PREPARATIONS IN 1948

The experience of the immediately preceding presidential campaign also provided important background for the transition of 1952-53. During the Truman-Dewey contest of 1948, in a show of unity on foreign policy, the State Department had briefed John Foster Dulles (again serving as Dewey's adviser) on the administration's plans with respect to the Soviet blockade of Berlin. This led to a Dewey statement supporting the administration on that subject. A little later, Dulles was in-

[1] John Robinson Beal, *John Foster Dulles* (1957), pp. 97-101. Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. 2 (1948), pp. 1686-99.

[2] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2 (1956), p. 508.

cluded in the official delegation to a United Nations General Assembly in Paris. With the approval of General George C. Marshall, who was then Secretary of State, Dulles had informal talks with some of the European foreign ministers in order to assure them of Dewey's constructive intentions.[3] It was not publicly reported at the time, but according to later reports, Dewey also received weekly intelligence summaries from the administration.[4] During the campaign, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal openly sought to interest both the administration and the Dewey camp in special arrangements to facilitate the transfer of responsibility for the complex military establishment.

As early as June 1948, even before the nominating conventions, the Bureau of the Budget had given thought to how the budget and other presidential messages would be handled if there should be a change of administrations.[5] That summer and autumn saw the peak of activity of the first Hoover Commission, which had task force staffs poking into all the governmental corners. Although officially a bipartisan, joint legislative-executive effort, the commission had been established at the initiative of the Republican-controlled Eighty-sixth Congress; the participation of former President Hoover and the personnel of many of its task forces gave the enterprise a generally conservative flavor. Service on the task forces was regarded in some quarters as a warm-up for men who might be part of a Dewey administration; the commission's report, due early in 1949, was expected to serve as a guide to Republican retrenchment and administrative reform. The research staff of the task force on fiscal affairs called attention to the problem of responsibility for the budget in a presidential year. A recommendation to change the budget submission date from January to April was justified partly on the ground that it would give a new President more control of his first budget.[6]

[3] Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[4] This was the White House lore as reported in 1956 by Merriman Smith, the veteran United Press reporter on the White House beat. In fact, according to Smith, Truman's extension of this privilege was based on the precedent that Roosevelt in 1944 had on at least one occasion notified Dewey secretly of an important war development—the breaking of the Japanese code. Merriman Smith, "Ike Offers Adlai Briefings," *Washington Post* (Sept. 5, 1956).

[5] U. S. Bureau of the Budget, "The Annual Messages of the President for 1949," working paper, June 15, 1948. This paper drew attention to the situation created by the Twentieth Amendment, summarized relevant constitutional and statutory provisions, and cited evidences of legislative intent about how the State of the Union, budget, and economic messages would be handled in such a situation.

[6] Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, *Task Force Report on Fiscal, Budgeting, and Accounting Activities* (1949), pp. 72-74. The suggested change was in the context of recommendations of broader scope that would

Governor Dewey, confident of winning the election, apparently made more specific plans to take over the government than any previous presidential candidate. His counsel, Charles D. Breitel, assembled the elements of a legislative program. It was rumored that cabinet members had not only been selected but were shopping for houses in Washington prior to election. Dewey staff members and advisers moved in and out of Washington during the campaign. They talked openly with Republican members of Congress and other Dewey supporters; they also talked discreetly with officials of the administration who were concerned about the transition problem. There was frequent communication between John E. Burton, Dewey's budget man, and staff members of the Bureau of the Budget including James Webb, Director of the Budget.[7]

While the interest of some of his subordinates in these arrangements did not escape President Truman's notice, he made no official recognition. Doing so would have detracted from the air of complete confidence he was maintaining in the face of what seemed overwhelming odds against his re-election. Afterward there was a good deal of chuckling in Washington over Dewey's abortive preparations, but as 1952 approached, the experience of the transition that never occurred appeared in retrospect as useful and relevant.

EARLY PLANNING IN 1952

If it were necessary to identify a single point in time at which the 1952-53 transition began, the date would have to be March 29, 1952. On that evening President Truman, speaking at a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in Washington, departed from his script and ended the widespread speculation about his intentions by announcing firmly that he would not be a candidate for another term. No matter how the con-

have sped up both the preparation and congressional handling of the budget. It might be noted that prior to the Budget and Accounting Act of 1950 the schedule put both President and Congress under somewhat greater pressure than was to be the case in 1952. At that time, the budget was due the first day of the session, although usually it was dated then and submitted several days later. In 1948, Congress also was still trying to carry out a section of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 that directs a special joint committee to examine the President's budget and submit recommendations on total taxes and spending to Congress by February 15. That directive, it turned out, was not followed in 1949 and has remained a dead letter ever since.

[7] Arthur Krock, "A Difficult Problem of Political Transfer," *New York Times* (Aug. 26, 1952).

ventions and the campaign turned out, there would be a new President in the White House in less than a year!

Realization that a major divide was being approached spread rapidly in governmental circles; for better or for worse, the political stalemate of the latter part of Truman's second term was about to be broken. Some officials began giving thought to their personal situations. Others calculated how to hedge the interests of their agencies, or laid plans to capitalize on the election no matter how it went. Outside the government, organizations and individuals, ranging from the most selfish lobbies to the most disinterested citizens and scholars, began producing speeches, statements, and research reports to point the way of the future. By summer, as one observer put it, ". . . the writing of reports had reached epidemic proportions, and a respectable civil servant, college professor, or civic reformer would have been less embarrassed to appear in public without his trousers than without his proposal for the consideration of the new Administration."[8] All this, it should be noted, was before anyone knew who the candidates would be; the new President would find part of his public far ahead of him on preparations.

In the White House and several other strategic points in the government, both political and career officials began to consider the specific problems of turnover and the appropriate course of conduct for an outgoing administration. One locus of such thinking was the Budget Bureau, which had been enlarged and transformed during the Roosevelt and Truman years and was now staffed by experienced professionals who regarded themselves as reliable custodians of the President's—any President's—interests. Within a few days after Truman's announcement, staff papers on transition, most of them apparently unsolicited but written with confidence that such activity would be favorably regarded from topside, were circulating in the bureau.[9] Some of these papers reviewed the historical record of relationships between Presidents and Presidents-elect. Others wrestled with the question of who should be responsible for the budget and other presidential messages; the 1948 study of the law on these points was brought up-to-date. One division of the bureau began planning the materials that would be

[8] Rowland Egger, "Administrative Aspects of the Political Transition," Paper delivered at American Society for Public Administration meeting, Apr. 14, 1953 (mimeo.), p. 5.

[9] One of the earliest apparently was "Adjusting to a Change in the Presidency," typewritten memorandum by Fritz Morstein Marx, Apr. 8, 1952.

needed to brief a new President and his associates on the budget system and the current budget, the functions of the Executive Office of the President, and major organizational problems of the government.[10]

This preparatory activity was in due course reported to the White House and received a presidential blessing. While the possibility of seeking a statutory change to shift responsibility for the budget to the incoming administration was explored, the consensus of staff opinion was that this would be of little value, if not undesirable. As Congress adjourned and the national party conventions loomed ahead, President Truman and his Budget Director, Frederick J. Lawton, agreed to complete and submit the budget in accordance with the statutory timetable. However, they planned to invite representatives of the winning candidate into the Budget Bureau for liaison purposes promptly after election.[11]

A second source of serious thinking on the problems of transition was the policy planning staff in the office of the Secretary of State. Pursuant to this group's broad mandate to exercise forethought about matters vital to the nation's international interests, one of its members was assigned shortly after Truman's withdrawal announcement to study the problem of relations between outgoing and incoming regimes and ways to maintain continuity and stability in foreign policy. Several weeks later a lengthy document was completed, approved by the Secretary, and forwarded to the White House where Truman read it appreciatively. The paper contained both a review of historical experience and an analysis of problems immediately ahead. It identified a number of foreign policy and security matters on which the national interest was vulnerable to partisan debate, off-the-cuff commitments by candidates, or ill-considered action by a new administration. Note was taken of the backgrounds of the leading potential candidates and how each might approach the question of foreign policy continuity. It was recommended that in the interest of responsible conduct during the campaign and the subsequent transitional period, both candidates should be briefed and kept currently informed on defense and foreign affairs. After the election, the flow of information to the victor should be stepped up, and his representatives should be taken into the most important agencies.

[10] Budget Bureau memorandum, Arnold Miles to William Finan, "Development of Briefing Materials for New President," May 6, 1952.

[11] E. M. Kenworthy, "President and President-Elect Bridge the Gap," *New York Times* (Nov. 16, 1952); personal interview, Frederick J. Lawton, July 20, 1959.

It was pointed out that in certain types of situations, the President should make special efforts to give the President-elect full background on what he was doing, and might even in special cases invite his concurrence in decisions; however, the President must be prepared to bear full responsibility for the duration of his term. This document apparently coincided with President Truman's thinking and served as an important policy guide during the subsequent months.[12]

THE BRIEFING BUNGLE

His own predilections reinforced by such advice, Mr. Truman determined, even before the 1952 conventions, "to keep both candidates informed about the important developments of our foreign policy." His avowed purpose was "to keep foreign policy out of partisan politics," and to "make sure that . . . whoever was elected would be fully informed and prepared to conduct foreign affairs."[13] This laudable effort, unfortunately, was badly mismanaged, although in the end it achieved minimal success and helped solidify useful precedents.

Stevenson to the White House

Early in August, soon after the Democratic convention, President Truman invited Governor Stevenson to confer with him at the White House. Instead of extending a similar invitation directly to Eisenhower, he told General Omar N. Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to get in touch with the Republican candidate and offer him a general briefing, plus regular intelligence reports during the campaign.

Just at this time Stevenson was shaping his campaign organization and strategy, and there was wide speculation whether he would stand on or try to dissociate himself from the Truman record. The first White House announcement of his forthcoming visit was vague about the purpose, and it was widely assumed that the objective was to reach an understanding on the role Truman would play in the campaign. Truman himself encouraged this interpretation by saying that the primary purpose was to discuss steps that would lead to a Democratic victory.[14]

[12] Interview, Charles Burton Marshall, July 1, 1959.
[13] Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 511.
[14] *New York Times* (Aug. 7, 8, 1952).

Not until just before the meeting did the White House announce that Stevenson would be briefed on the defense and international situations, and this statement received but slight attention.[15]

Stevenson arrived at the White House shortly after noon on August 12 and was ushered into the cabinet room for a briefing session. General Bradley and General Walter Bedell Smith, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, apparently did most of the talking, although an impressive array of officials, including the Secretary of State, the Director for Mutual Security, and the heads of all the units of the Executive Office of the President, also attended. Despite the presence of all this talent, the session was reported to have lasted less than half an hour. After the briefing, Stevenson had luncheon with the President and the cabinet. Later he had a private talk with the President. The press announcement after the meeting stressed the political understandings that had been reached, including an arrangement for two of Truman's staff members to go to Stevenson's headquarters to help coordinate campaign activities.[16]

Meanwhile General Bradley had not carried out his assignment to communicate with Eisenhower. Apparently not realizing that it was urgent, he was waiting until he could see Eisenhower personally; the latter was then in the west but coming east in a few days.

Ike Attacks and Declines

The evening of the Truman-Stevenson conference, Eisenhower made a public declaration that the event showed how Truman had handpicked and intended to dominate his political heir. Eisenhower charged an attempt to use the prestige of the White House to gather votes for the Democratic candidate. He particularly criticized the President for having Generals Bradley and Smith participate, since it implied "a decision to involve responsible nonpolitical officers of our Government . . . into a political campaign in which they have no part."[17] Various Eisenhower supporters made similar criticisms.[18]

[15] *Ibid.* (Aug. 12, 1952). This story was buried on p. 12, while a front-page story on the same day stressed the meeting's political implications.

[16] *Washington Post* (Aug. 13, 1952).

[17] *New York Times* (Aug. 13, 1952).

[18] The *Washington Post* (Aug. 14, 1952), for example, commented editorially: ". . . Confidential military information was used for partisan purposes. This is utterly contrary to the principle of nonpartisanship in the military forces, and Ike has good

The next day Truman tried to recover the fumble by extending a direct invitation to Eisenhower to come to Washington for a luncheon with the cabinet, a briefing by the CIA, and a report on "the situation in the White House." He also told Eisenhower that both he and Stevenson would receive weekly CIA reports.[19]

Eisenhower declined the invitation. In a message to Truman he said: "In my current position as standard-bearer of the Republican party and of other Americans who want to bring about a change in the National Government, it is my duty to remain free to analyze publicly the policies and acts of the present Administration. . . ." In such circumstances, he thought any communications between them should be "known to all the American people." He thought it would be "unwise and result in confusion in the public mind" if he attended a White House meeting, although he would be willing to do so in the event of a grave emergency. He agreed to accept CIA reports with the understanding that, except where security considerations were involved, it would "in no other way limit my freedom to discuss or analyze foreign programs as my judgment dictates."[20]

Truman then tried to soften the impression that his invitation to Eisenhower had been made belated and under pressure by stating in his press conference that arrangements for Eisenhower to be briefed had been made much earlier. Eisenhower headquarters promptly denied

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reason to be provoked by it." "The incident must be put down as another Truman *faux pas*. . . ."

[19] Full text of the telegram, dated Aug. 13, 1952, is in Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 512.

[20] *New York Times* (Aug. 15, 1952). Most commentators, even those giving Truman credit for good intentions, concluded that he had given Eisenhower good grounds for taking the position he did. Arthur Krock, for example, said: "The first mistake by the Administration was to include General Bradley among the 'briefers,' since this lent color to the often-made charge that the Chiefs of Staff work in and are responsive to a partisan political atmosphere. (Significantly, Bradley's name was omitted as a 'briefer' of Eisenhower in the President's August 13 invitation.) The second was not to include, with the original announcement of the Stevenson briefing, the fact that a similar invitation for another date would be extended to Eisenhower. The third mistake was not to make this announcement immediately after it was omitted; the fourth was to let the situation stand in this posture until the meeting with Stevenson was over and Eisenhower had issued his blast of Aug. 12.

"In consequence of this unbelievable series of Administration blunders the President's invitation to the General will be widely classified as an afterthought, in recognition of the force of Eisenhower's criticism."

Considering that this was "the most professionally political regime the country has known for many years," Krock said, it was "one of the most complete exhibitions of slumber at the switch an Administration has ever displayed to the people." " 'Tho' the Soldier Knew Someone Had Blundered.' " *Ibid.*

it. After several hours of confusion, General Bradley issued a statement taking responsibility for failing to carry out this assignment.[21]

"Dear Ike"

This put President Truman in a little better light, but he remained angry at Eisenhower's rebuff. On August 16 he dispatched one of his famous handwritten letters:

> Dear Ike:
>
> I am sorry if I caused you any embarrassment.
>
> What I've always had in mind was and is a continuing foreign policy. You know that is a fact because you had a part in outlining it.
>
> Partisan politics should stop at the boundaries of the United States. I'm extremely sorry that you have allowed a bunch of screwballs to come between us.
>
> You have made a bad mistake, and I'm hoping that it won't injure this great Republic.
>
> There has never been one like it and I want to see it continue regardless of the man who occupies the most important position in the history of the world.
>
> May God guide you and give you light.
>
> From a man who has always been your friend and who always intended to be!
>
> Sincerely,
> Harry S. Truman[22]

Eisenhower responded three days later with a note expressing appreciation of Mr. Truman's intention but reiterating his reasons for declining the White House invitation.[23]

This apparently was the last communication between Truman and Eisenhower until after the election, although both Eisenhower and Stevenson received regular CIA reports. On one or more occasions during the campaign, State Department officials transmitted to Eisenhower, through third parties, special background information on current matters of some delicacy, with the thought that full explanation of the administration's position would forestall the Republican candidate from making attacks that might do unintended damage to the national inter-

[21] *Washington Post* (Aug. 15, 1952).

[22] Apparently Mr. Truman made a copy of his handwritten letter, because he quotes it in full in his *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 513.

[23] The letter is described but not quoted, *Ibid.*

est. These efforts, although apparently more or less successful, were unauthorized by and probably unknown to President Truman.[24]

PREPARATIONS DURING THE CAMPAIGN

As the campaign wore on, discussion of and preparation for the inevitable transition continued in Washington. Only a few days after the briefing controversy, Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett, a Republican who had served Democratic Presidents in several posts, devoted most of his press conference to reviving the Forrestal theme of the importance of an orderly change of civilian leaders of the incredibly complex military establishment. With the Korean War going on, a smooth transfer was needed now far more than it had been in 1948. Lovett suggested that the President-elect be prepared to designate, "within a matter of hours after election," a person—preferably the future Secretary of Defense—to sit unofficially in the councils of the Pentagon. By observing the sessions in which the final decisions about the next year's budget were hammered out, and by other observations spread over several weeks, such a person might learn enough to be reasonably effective soon after inauguration day. Another possibility suggested by Lovett was that some key officials at the political appointee level be carried over for a limited period of time in order to assist the new administration, although he made it clear that he envisaged no such role for himself.[25] Such pronouncements stimulated a number of newspaper and magazine "think pieces" about the transition problem.[26] Officials of the administration encouraged this publicity, in the hope that the candidates or those around them would take notice and give thought to the future.

The Budget Bureau made active preparations. The bulk of the staff carried on the usual autumn task of reviewing departmental estimates, assembling preliminary budget figures, and sharpening the issues for top-level decisions in November and December prior to submission in January. For the benefit of the next administration, the bureau's management experts prepared documents on the current administrative prob-

[24] Interview, C. B. Marshall, July 1, 1959.
[25] *New York Times* (Aug. 19, 1952).
[26] One of the most perceptive was William H. Hessler, "Changing the Guard in Washington," *The Reporter* (Sept. 30, 1952).

lems and proposals for reorganization in each major agency. Its legislative reference office, a clearinghouse on presidential policy, summarized the legislative recommendations Truman had made to Congress and what action, if any, had been taken on each, thus providing a ready guide to the status of the major policy issues of the preceding years. Another Budget project reflected a growing problem of legislative-executive relations during the Truman years: the tendency of Congress to enact legislation with a time limit, forcing the President to seek new legislation by a specific date if he wanted the authority or activity continued. A document was prepared summarizing 101 laws and statutory provisions due to expire at the end of 1952 or during 1953. While some of these laws, such as the authorization for a commission to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the death of the composer of "Home Sweet Home," might be allowed to expire without shaking the governmental foundations, a number of them involved major policies on taxation, defense production, foreign aid, and other going programs.[27] In the hope of alerting the Stevenson and Eisenhower camps to this inexorable timetable, the document was made available to the press.[28] As election day approached, a final step was to draft a letter that the President might send after election, inviting the winner to send a representative to the Budget Bureau.[29]

ESTABLISHING CONTACT

The morning after election found President Truman disappointed at the outcome but prepared to face the future and follow through with the plans that had been laid. In a typical impatient gesture he sent his curt message to Eisenhower from the train, without waiting to return to his desk where the Budget Bureau's more polished version awaited his signature. As his train rolled into Washington, he emphasized to his staff his determination to set an example of statesmanship, to do what he could to achieve national unity and continuity of policy in foreign affairs, and to ease the transition and assist General Eisenhower

[27] U. S. Bureau of the Budget, "Federal Legislation Which Will Expire in 1953" (mimeo.).

[28] See C. P. Trussell, "Hangover of Laws Awaits '52 Victor," *New York Times* (Aug. 24, 1952).

[29] Interview, Frederick J. Lawton, July 20, 1959.

in every possible way. Apparently there also had been some forethought on this matter in the Eisenhower group because, as already noted, the President-elect responded almost immediately and agreed to appoint a budget representative.

An Invitation Accepted

After receiving Eisenhower's message and conferring with his Secretary of State and close adviser, Dean Acheson, Truman sent a warmer message to the President-elect:

> Thank you for your prompt and courteous reply to my telegram. I know you will agree with me that there ought to be an orderly transfer of the business of the executive branch of the government to the new administration, particularly in view of the international dangers and problems that confront this country and the whole free world. I invite you, therefore, to meet with me in the White House at your early convenience to discuss the problem of this transition period, so that it may be clear to all the world that this nation is united in its struggle for freedom and peace.[80]

That afternoon Truman issued a public statement indicating acceptance of the election results as the will of the people and asking the nation to join him in supporting the President-elect. He announced that he had invited General Eisenhower to send a representative to consult with the Bureau of the Budget but made it clear that he would submit the budget himself as required by law. There would be cooperation on other aspects of the transition if the President-elect wished it. Referring to the many problems of foreign affairs to which there was "no quick and easy solution," Truman announced that he was inviting Eisenhower to the White House in order to discuss the problem of the transition in person with his successor and to dramatize national unity.[81]

The White House staff and the heads of departments were instructed to begin preparing reports on the matters of business about which the incoming administration most needed to be informed. At that point, Truman said later, he felt "no misgivings" about the forthcoming transfer, despite what he considered Eisenhower's "regrettable use of the

[80] Truman, *Memoirs,* Vol. 2, p. 505.
[81] *Ibid.,* pp. 505-06.

Korean tragedy for campaign purposes," because the President-elect was so widely experienced in foreign affairs.[32] Eisenhower, as it turned out, was prepared to cooperate up to a point, but not to go as far as Truman apparently had in mind. It took additional exchanges to clarify their respective positions.

The next day, November 6, while he was waiting for Eisenhower's consent to the White House meeting, Truman dispatched a courier to the President-elect's temporary headquarters in Georgia. The courier bore a letter calling Eisenhower's attention to several "really fundamental things pending before the United Nations." Truman asked that someone in addition to the budget representative be sent "to discuss these matters authoritatively" with the secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense. He stated: "All these things are vital policy matters which can only be decided by the President of the United States, *but I would prefer not to make firm decisions on these matters without your concurrence,* although the decisions will have to be made."[33]

Probably the most crucial current problem had to do with the Korean armistice negotiations. After diplomatic maneuvering, the United States had introduced a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly that would back up the American negotiators in their insistence on the principle of non-forcible repatriation of prisoners. Secretary Acheson gave Truman a memorandum pointing out that Eisenhower's campaign statements and proposal to go to Korea had suggested the possibility of a change of American policy, thus creating confusion among the free nations and jeopardizing passage of the resolution. Acheson concluded: "If General Eisenhower feels that it were possible for him to do so, a statement by him setting forth the purposes of his trip to Korea and his support for the efforts now being made . . . in the General Assembly, would be of the greatest assistance in meeting this critical situation. . . ."[34]

Eisenhower promptly sent a telegram accepting Truman's invitation to the White House and the proposal that he appoint representatives to confer with the administration.[35] The next morning Truman replied, saying: "We evidently are thinking along the same lines. . . ." He expressed the hope that Eisenhower's Defense and State Department representatives would be appointed soon. "It also will require consider-

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 506-07.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 507-08. Italics added.
[34] The memorandum is quoted at length *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 510-11.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 507.

able time to close up the budget and get it ready for presentation before January 18th," he said. "I hope your man can report to the Budget as promptly as possible."[36]

Clarifying Roles

Truman's language up to this point had implied that Eisenhower's representatives might somehow participate in interim decisions on foreign and budget policy. Eisenhower now thought it necessary to insert a note of caution. In a note on November 7 he told Truman: "In your letter you use the word 'authoritative' by which I take it you mean that my representative be able accurately to reflect my views. This he will be able to do, but quite naturally this will likewise be the limit of his authority since I myself can have none under current conditions."[37]

Newspaper reports out of Washington and Augusta the following day also suggested conflicting expectations of what this would lead to. The Associated Press story from the White House led off with the assertion: "President Truman is reported to be offering President-elect Eisenhower a major voice in foreign policy decisions. . . ." While Truman was not quoted directly, he was "represented as feeling" that there were a number of major decisions that could not be deferred but whose consequences would fall mainly on the new administration. Because unity was important on these matters, "officials said President Truman would like to make decisions which have Eisenhower's approval."[38] But reports from Augusta indicated just the opposite: "President-elect Eisenhower gave notice yesterday that . . . he would not participate in any government decisions before taking office. . . ." The written statement released by Hagerty emphasized that Eisenhower would have no authority until he had taken the oath of office. The men being sent to confer with the administration would have no authority except to represent his personal views. Their chief function would be to obtain information, and they "would not and could not be bound in any way on foreign or fiscal policy."[39]

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 509-10.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 509. It might be noted that in the *Memoirs* this message is quoted just *prior* to Truman's message saying: "We are evidently thinking along the same lines. . . ." However, the wording of these exchanges suggests that Truman had not yet received Eisenhower's message qualifying the role the representatives would play.

[38] *Washington Post* (Nov. 9, 1952).

[39] *Ibid.*

Dodge and Lodge

Late in the evening of November 8, Senator Eugene Millikin of Colorado, a highly respected congressional spokesman, soon to become Chairman of the Finance Committee, arrived at Augusta. The next morning, General Lucius Clay, Senator Lodge, and Herbert Brownell arrived. They were accompanied by a new figure in the Eisenhower entourage, Joseph M. Dodge, a Detroit banker.[40] That evening it was announced in Augusta that Dodge would be Eisenhower's representative to the Bureau of the Budget, and that Lodge would be his liaison with the State, Defense, and other departments. In their subsequent meeting with reporters, Dodge and Lodge backed away from the previous indication that they were going to Washington to represent the President-elect's views. They said that they did not intend to participate in policy decisions but merely to gain information for Eisenhower. Any policy recommendations they might make would be to him and not to Truman.[41]

When Dodge arrived at the Budget Bureau two days later, he and Director Lawton found themselves in full agreement on the status he should have. Dodge would sit in on staff conferences on the budget, study the materials that had been prepared for the new administration, and have direct access to the staff for additional information. He would not participate with Truman and Lawton in final decisions on the budget but would be told of the decisions as they were made. He would not be asked for commitments of any kind. Dodge told reporters: "I do not intend to either concur or non-concur. . . ." He did not know, he said, whether he would be the next Budget Director.[42]

The Black Books

In preparation for the White House meeting, Truman had important security information put directly into Eisenhower's hands. On November 15, CIA Director Smith and the Secretary of the National Security

[40] After wartime service in Washington, Dodge had become known to Eisenhower and to Clay as an adviser on fiscal policy to the military governments of Germany and Japan. "To the Japanese," one reporter later noted, "his name is synonymous with austerity." *New York Times* (Nov. 16, 1952).

[41] *Ibid.* (Nov. 10, 1952); *Washington Post* (Nov. 10, 1952); Washington *Evening Star* (Nov. 10, 1952).

[42] *Ibid.* (Nov. 12, 1952).

Council, James Lay, slipped into Augusta to give Eisenhower three top-secret briefing books. The contents included the basic NSC policy papers, country-by-country summaries of United States policies and programs abroad, intelligence estimates on the world's danger spots, and plans to be followed in the event of communist attack or other emergencies in various locations.[43] About this time the Atomic Energy Commission also gave the President-elect a secret briefing. The AEC had news indeed. Only a few days earlier, in tests at Eniwetok atoll in the Pacific, there had been a successful explosion of "Mike," a thermo-nuclear device, forerunner of the hydrogen bomb.[44]

PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT

Arriving at the Washington airport on November 18, Eisenhower's party was escorted into the city over the roundabout parade route. Large crowds, including the government workers Truman had ordered released from their jobs for the occasion, greeted him enthusiastically. The triumphal parade ended at the White House, where Truman, serious of face but showing signs of pride in his ability to swallow defeat and act in a statesmanlike fashion, greeted his successor. Eisenhower was tense and unsmiling.

At the White House

First on the program was a private talk between Truman and Eisenhower. Truman, according to his recollections, told the General that his purpose in inviting him was to emphasize the sincerity of his desire to be cooperative in the national interest and to reassure other countries about the stability of American foreign policy. He said he was not setting a political trap or trying to avoid responsibility. He was prepared to exercise the responsibilities of his office until January 20 and understood that the President-elect was "naturally and properly reluctant" to assume

[43] The volumes are referred to briefly in an NSC memorandum reporting the steps it had taken to facilitate the transition: James S. Lay, Jr., "Memorandum For The President," Jan. 9, 1953 (From the files of Charles S. Murphy, Harry S. Truman Library). The press learned of their existence several days later; see *New York Times* (Nov. 22, 1952) and *Washington Post* (Nov. 23, 1952).

[44] H. D. Smyth, Acting Chairman of AEC, letter to the President, Jan. 8, 1953 (From the files of Charles S. Murphy, Harry S. Truman Library).

responsibility until that time. Nevetheless, Truman pointed out, there were certain decisions to be made in the area of foreign policy where success would depend on continuity of policy under the new administration. He said, "We will tell you about these issues and would welcome concurrence if you want to give it. . . . But we will not press for it. This is a matter on which you will have to make up your own mind on the basis of what is best for America."[45]

Then Truman and Eisenhower joined Acheson, Lovett, Snyder, Harriman, Lodge, and Dodge in the cabinet room. Truman again explained the purposes of the meeting and the basis on which he offered cooperation. He welcomed Dodge and Lodge and reiterated that the administration would be glad to cooperate with any additional representatives Eisenhower might send. A memorandum by Snyder on Treasury operations and pending problems of tax policy and debt management was handed to Eisenhower.

The main business of the meeting, however, was foreign policy. Acheson reviewed major problems in Korea, NATO, Iran, Indo-China, and elsewhere. He emphasized that the problem of United Nations support of the American position on Korean armistice negotiations had become acute. Even the British were interested in a new truce proposal by India, which the United States regarded as unsatisfactory. Acheson made the first "concurrence" proposal: he produced a draft statement Eisenhower might make to back the administration on the prisoners issue. Eisenhower did not commit himself but said he would study the statement and discuss the subject with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, whom he expected to see in New York two days later.

Truman then presented a proposed press statement. Senator Lodge recommended that certain portions be stricken, including the sentence: "We both agree that it is of the utmost importance to preserve the principle that prisoners of war shall not be forcibly repatriated."[46] Truman agreed to the deletion and one or two other changes. As released, the statement reported that the President and President-elect had discussed international problems and "worked out a framework for liaison and exchange of information." However, they had made no arrangement

[45] Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, pp. 514-15.

[46] According to the only account of the meeting based on Eisenhower sources, Lodge agreed with the broad principle but did not believe that Eisenhower should be committed to a statement prepared by the outgoing administration. Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (Harper & Brothers, 1956), pp. 16-17.

"inconsistent with the full spirit of our Constitution." It was asserted that Eisenhower had not been asked to assume any of the responsibilities of the Presidency before taking office. (The possibility of concurrence on selected issues was not mentioned.) The meeting and the arrangements made were proof, the statement concluded, "of the ability of the people of this country to manage their affairs with a sense of continuity and with responsibility."[47]

Eisenhower and his party left the White House after an hour and a half and went to the Pentagon for a forty-five minute military briefing by General Bradley and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Having the chiefs perform in their own building was apparently in deference to Eisenhower's previous criticism of the involvement of military men at the White House. From the Pentagon, Eisenhower returned to the airport and left for New York.

Concurrence, Limited

Truman's request for an expression of concurrence on the Korean prisoners issue was met in a roundabout way. Possibly in deference to Lodge's "strong reservations about Acheson's handling of the prisoner issue in the U.N.,"[48] or possibly because of a more general reluctance to give specific endorsement to any policy of his predecessor, Eisenhower made no direct statement. However, the following day in New York, Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, soon to become chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, emerged from Eisenhower's office and —with frequent glances at a prompting slip handed him by the latter's staff—told reporters that the President-elect had "emphasized his agreement with the principle of no forcible repatriation of prisoners."[49] President Truman apparently regarded this indirect concurrence as adequate for his purposes. The following day he opened his press conference by announcing his pleasure at the Eisenhower-via-Wiley statement and then firmly declined to comment on what might lay behind the face of it.[50]

Eisenhower conferred with Anthony Eden on November 20. Afterward, presumably in deference to the American position, Eden asked

[47] Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, pp. 520-21; *New York Times* (Nov. 19, 1952).
[48] Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[49] *New York Times* (Nov. 20, 1952).
[50] *Ibid.* (Nov. 21, 1952); *Washington Post* (Nov. 21, 1952).

for "clarification" of the Indian truce plan to which the United States was opposed. However, within a few hours he abandoned his objections and joined in support of the India plan, leaving the United States in an isolated position. The "split" was soon healed, however, when the Soviets attacked the India plan and blocked any immediate action.[51]

So far as is known, the Truman administration made no further requests for Eisenhower's concurrence on decisions.

After the Meeting

Truman pushed the cooperative effort forward. His top ranking assistant, John R. Steelman, was designated as the official point of contact for his opposite number in the Eisenhower staff, Sherman Adams.[52] The National Security Council followed up its earlier three-volume briefing production with a book containing key data regarding the status of the various national security programs—namely, the military, mobilization, mutual security, civil defense, stockpiling, national psychological, foreign intelligence, and internal security programs.[53] Similar "black book" projects were under way in almost every agency. Truman had specifically ordered that these summaries were to be brief and "essentially informational," explaining but not arguing for existing policies.[54] From the White House down, the administration stood ready to carry out the President's instructions that his successor was to be "informed to the point of action" on inauguration day.

The Truman-Eisenhower meeting seemed to have achieved its essential purpose of suggesting American solidarity and establishing a framework for cooperation. Nevetheless, Truman had been left disturbed by Eisenhower's lack of responsiveness, the "frozen grimness" he displayed.[55] An uneasy feeling that all was not well spread through the administration. Eisenhower's own view of the meeting has never been recorded,

[51] *New York Times* (Nov. 22, 25, 1952); Washington *Sunday Star* (Nov. 23, 1952).

[52] Personal interview, John R. Steelman, December 29, 1959.

[53] James S. Lay, Jr., "Memorandum For the President," Jan. 9, 1953 (From the files of Charles S. Murphy, Harry S. Truman Library). According to Lay, this volume was made available to Eisenhower through his aide, Col. Paul Carroll, on November 26, but Carroll asked the NSC to keep it for the time being. This was on the eve of Eisenhower's departure for Korea. The NSC still had the book on January 9.

[54] *Washington Post* (Nov. 23, 1952).

[55] Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 521.

but the reporters agreed that he was stiff and unusually serious as he left the White House.[56]

There also were suggestions that more than partisanship and personal dislike of Truman was affecting the President-elect. Speaking informally to an audience of CIA employees a few days later, Truman remarked what an advantage it was for Eisenhower to have the CIA, the NSC, and all the briefings; there had been no such help when *he* took over the Presidency in 1945. Even so, reported Truman with grim satisfaction, Eisenhower had been "rather appalled at all that the President needs to know."[57]

Columnist Tom Stokes put it more eloquently:

> It is possible, even likely, that Gen. Eisenhower really did not have a full awareness of the awesome responsibility imposed upon him . . . until the hour he spent in the White House. . . . At least the President-elect seemed to observers to be a different and changed man when he came from the conference with President Truman. . . . His face wore a grim and startled look as he confronted the horde of newspapermen. . . . The infectious grin of campaign days was missing. . . . When he had arrived at the White House an hour earlier he had put on a smile for the photographers. . . . Then he had come fresh from the cheers of the throngs gathered along the Capital's streets to welcome him, a familiar re-echo of the crowds which had greeted him everywhere all over the country in his triumphant campaign. But, only an hour later, the prison doors of the White House had become very real to him, and for the first time we may imagine. Now, suddenly, as a result of what he had heard behind the closed doors in the cabinet room, . . . all the millions he had seen on his campaign . . . had become his charges, his responsibility. . . . He had faced the man who has had this stewardship for nearly seven and a half years. . . . The Nation's Chief Executive who sat at the head of the table had once, himself, been an awe-stricken and grim-faced man. It was that late afternoon back in April, 1945. . . . Symbolically, Gen. Eisenhower had reached the same hour; for the shadow of his coming responsibility fell upon him in the same surroundings, abruptly. Long ago and far away now must have seemed the cheering multitude of the campaign, and the golf course at Augusta, Ga. . . . This was it—from now on. This White House.[58]

[56] *Washington Post* (Nov. 19, 1952); *New York Times* (Nov. 19, 1952).
[57] *Ibid.* (Nov. 22, 1952).
[58] Thomas L. Stokes, "Eisenhower Grim After Meeting," Washington *Evening Star* (Nov. 19, 1952).

CHAPTER 32

IKE'S PREPARATIONS

The era was past when the President-elect could postpone serious planning and go on vacation for a month after election, as Wilson and Harding had done. General Eisenhower could afford but two weeks at his golf club in Augusta, Georgia. The place offered privacy, a rest from the speeches and constant travel of campaigning, and an opportunity for several hours a day on the links, but no escape from responsibility. Preparations had to be commenced. President Truman's messages demanded attention and decisions. Staff members shuttled back and forth from New York City. Governor Dewey and other important visitors dropped in. One can only speculate about the number of hours spent on the long-distance telephone.

AT THE COMMODORE

Returning to New York on November 18 after his brief visit to Washington, Eisenhower began ten days of intense activity at his headquarters in the Hotel Commodore.[1] With a trip to Korea coming up, Congress convening in six weeks, and inauguration shortly after that, there was no time to waste. The cabinet and other top appointments had

[1] While most of his work and appointments were at the Commodore, Eisenhower and his family continued to occupy his residence at Columbia University, from which he was still on leave, until his departure for Washington. His resignation from Columbia was submitted about this time, to be effective January 19.

to be decided promply so that people could settle their affairs and find out something about their jobs by January 20. Program priorities had to be established. The details of inauguration and moving to Washington had to be worked out.

These preparations were well under way when Eisenhower returned. Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., Sherman Adams, and the others of the campaign organization had carried on with hardly a respite. The headquarters at the Commodore was a going operation, by far the largest and most systematic staff activity ever at the disposal of a President-elect. For a political headquarters, the secretarial service, physical arrangements, and exterior appurtenances were impressive. James Hagerty handled the press with his customary efficiency. In other offices and hotel suites elsewhere in New York, many individuals and groups worked on more-or-less authorized Eisenhower projects, often with the aid of memoranda, reports, or studies prepared in advance.[2]

But despite the self-conscious effort to be extremely businesslike, there was evident turmoil. The volume of communication was enormous; half the world, it seemed, sought answers from or access to the president-elect. Eisenhower's aides worked frantically to reach the people who had to be consulted and to stand off the others. It was hard to know which of the reports and recommendations pouring in were responsible and authorized and which were speculative ventures of people with axes to grind. Because so many people were dealing with frequently overlapping subjects, an immense amount of lateral checking and conferring was required. "At times," reported Donovan, "the confusion at the Commodore was so profuse that some members of the new Administration asked themselves wryly whether the country would be in safe hands when they took over."[3]

Taft and Other Visitors

The first important visitor to the Commodore on the morning after Eisenhower's return was Senator Taft, who symbolized the interlocking nature of the President-elect's problems of personnel, program, and

[2] One informant told the writer: "The real power holders didn't come around the Commodore much, except when necessary to see Ike. They had more private and comfortable places to do their business. The Commodore rat race was mostly for the underlings."

[3] Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (1956), p. 12.

party relationships. After the Morningside Heights agreement, in which Eisenhower had accepted a Taft-written statement on domestic policy and promised appropriate recognition of the Taft wing of the party in the event of victory, the Senator had campaigned loyally for the ticket. Now Taft was eager to get down to business. While the watchful Democrats and perhaps some of the Dewey Republicans would have welcomed an Eisenhower declaration of independence from Taft, this was not made. Eisenhower was determined to heal the wounds of the Republican party and have harmonious relations with Congress. Taft was one more in a long series of problems in conciliation that he had solved on his way to the top.

Taft also was (for him) in a conciliatory mood. On the strength of the Morningside Heights agreement and his subsequent campaigning, he regarded the electoral victory as partly his own triumph. As the most influential Republican in Congress, he was prepared to cooperate to make the first Republican administration in twenty years a success. He came to the Commodore accompanied by Joseph Martin, soon to become Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the purpose of discussing a legislative program. The talk, which ranged the entire field of domestic policy, was a friendly one. Eisenhower promised Taft that he would not call a labor-management conference to formulate amendments to the Taft-Hartley labor act, as some had suggested, but would leave the job to Taft's Senate labor committee. Taft was encouraged by the President-elect's evident determination to cut $10 billion out of Truman's budget, which was expected to be almost $80 billion. Taft agreed that the law authorizing the President to reorganize administrative agencies, subject to a legislative veto, should be renewed before its expiration on April 1.[4]

But Taft's interest was not in legislation alone. He expected to be consulted on the cabinet and had, in fact, submitted a list of people to be considered for various offices. Although Eisenhower and Herbert Brownell discussed the cabinet situation with him and must certainly have told him of certain choices that were already made, it turned out later that there had been other things afoot with respect to the cabinet that Taft was not made aware of. At that point it apparently was not yet clear to Eisenhower how seriously Taft took their relationship, or the extent to which Taft had claims and interests that set the possibility of

[4] Washington *Sunday Star* (Nov. 23, 1952); Stewart Alsop, "Ike-Taft Conflict Lulled for Present," *Washington Post* (Dec. 22, 1952).

an affront or a surrender to him in almost anything Eisenhower might do.

In the succeeding days the President-elect's schedule was crowded with appointments. He had his first post-election talk with his running mate, Vice President-elect Richard M. Nixon.[5] Several Republican senators, state chairmen, and national committeemen called on him, as well as leaders of the AFL and numerous supporters from the world of business. Eisenhower discussed foreign affairs with Senator Wiley and British Foreign Secretary Eden, and made a visit to the United Nations to tour the new General Assembly building and confer with Secretary General Trygve Lie. One evening he made a quick trip to Washington to attend a reunion of his West Point class.

Cabinet Announcements

By far the most important Eisenhower activity in the first few days back in New York had to do with personnel. The first-person accounts necessary to reconstruct the process of cabinet selection are not yet available, but the evidence is clear that on this subject there had been some forethought among Eisenhower's friends, if not by the General himself. Shortly after the Republican convention, in fact, Harold E. Talbott, a New York businessman acting on behalf of himself and an informal group of Eisenhower supporters, advisers, and fund raisers, had engaged the management consulting firm of McKinsey and Company to make a study of the "executive recruiting" problem if Eisenhower won.[6] Well before election, such men as Herbert Brownell and Lucius Clay were canvassing prospects for the cabinet. These two and Sherman Adams apparently acted as an informal personnel committee while Eisenhower was in Augusta. At precisely what point and by whom offers were made is not known, but by the time Eisenhower returned to New York, the cabinet situation was well in hand. On November 20, the second day after his return, he announced the first choices.

[5] In view of campaign talk about making the Vice President an active member of the administration team, there was newspaper speculation that Nixon might be given an important role in the pre-inaugural preparations, but this was not to be the case. Eisenhower and Nixon had not been well acquainted before the campaign, and the strain caused by the disclosure of Nixon's special political fund and the subsequent debate in Eisenhower headquarters about asking Nixon to get off the ticket had not yet healed.

[6] Personal interview, John J. Corson, McKinsey and Co., July 28, 1959.

John Foster Dulles was designated for Secretary of State. A New York lawyer long active in public and international affairs, Dulles was the leading prospect for the post, by virtue of having been foreign affairs adviser to Republican presidential candidates since 1944. Appointed to the State Department in 1950 in a gesture of bipartisanship in foreign policy, he had handled most of the negotiations on the peace treaty with Japan. Although the *Chicago Tribune* looked at his record of association with Dewey, Truman, and Alger Hiss and pronounced him just another Acheson,[7] the appointment was widely acceptable in the party. While this was the achievement of a lifelong ambition of Dulles (a grandfather and an uncle both had held the post before him), he had at the last minute expressed to Brownell and Clay some reluctance to take on the administrative responsibilities of running the State Department; perhaps a post with the National Security Council, where he could deal exclusively with policy, would be more suitable. But the recruiters—and Eisenhower when he returned from Augusta—brushed aside the objections.[8]

Charles E. Wilson, president of General Motors Corporation, was named for Secretary of Defense. A man who had started as an engineer and risen through the corporate ranks, Wilson was a beginner in politics, and in military matters as well except for his experience as a defense contractor. The appointment reflected Eisenhower's respect for successful corporation executives, and the strong support his candidacy had received from business in general and the leaders of GM in particular. Wilson presumably could handle the complex procurement and other managerial problems of the Pentagon; Eisenhower's experience would enable him to be his own chief military strategist.

Douglas McKay, Governor of Oregon, was announced for Secretary of the Interior. McKay had gone into state politics after a successful career as an automobile dealer. Considered a competent governor, he had been one of the first to raise the Eisenhower banner in the West.

The following day, November 21, three more appointments were announced. The first was George M. Humphrey of Cleveland for Secretary of the Treasury. A "businessman's businessman" and little known to the public, Humphrey was chairman of M. A. Hanna and Co., a holding

[7] *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Nov. 21, 1952).
[8] John Robinson Beal, *John Foster Dulles* (1957), pp. 136-37.

company for coal, steel, shipping, and other enterprises. His previous experience in government was as chairman of the Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce, and briefly as adviser to the European Cooperation Administration on problems of German industry.[9]

Herbert Brownell, Jr., the President-elect's political adviser, was designated for Attorney-General. Quiet and reputed to be uncommonly astute, Brownell had combined a New York law career and political association with the Dewey Republicans.

Harold E. Stassen, president of the University of Pennsylvania and former governor of Minnesota, was announced as Director for Mutual Security—head of the foreign aid program. After his bid for the Republican nomination failed, Stassen had thrown his support to Eisenhower as the convention bandwagon got rolling.

On November 24, two more appointments were announced. Ezra Taft Benson of Utah was designated for Secretary of Agriculture. Benson had been active in organizing and managing farm cooperatives and at the time of his selection was one of the Twelve Apostles, the highest council of the Mormon church. He was well known in agricultural and religious circles, if not to the general public. Also, Sherman Adams was designated to hold the top White House staff post as The Assistant to the President.

The following day, Arthur E. Summerfield, Republican National Chairman, was named for Postmaster-General. Summerfield announced that, unlike Jim Farley, he would resign the party post on entering the cabinet. Also on November 25, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby was designated Administrator of the important Federal Security Agency. Wife of a former governor of Texas, Mrs. Hobby was an executive and newspaper publisher in her own right. She was best known nationally as Colonel Hobby, wartime head of the Womens Army Corps.

After that, there were no announcements of cabinet-level appointments for several days. While some last-minute snags were being worked out on the Commerce and Labor portfolios, Hagerty issued reports of appointments to the future White House staff—veterans of the Eisenhower campaign team in practically all cases.

[9] According to one report, Humphrey was suggested to Brownell and Clay by Sidney Weinberg, a New York businessman well known as an unofficial talent scout for both government and business. E. J. Kahn, Jr., "Director's Director, II," *New Yorker* (Sept. 15, 1956), pp. 49-72.

Reaction to the Appointments

Public reaction to this rapid-fire burst of announcements was highly favorable. Appointing most of the cabinet so soon after election, at a time when previous Presidents-elect had just started to think about the problem, was taken as evidence that Eisenhower appreciated the seriousness of the national situation and was moving with the briskness that had been expected of him. It was essentially what had been promised, but the "business" character of the group evoked comment. Humphrey and Wilson were strictly businessmen; McKay and Summerfield businessmen who had recently entered politics. Yet there were few suggestions of unfitness about this. Perhaps a man like Wilson who had coordinated Chevrolet, Buick, and other giants of the GM empire could do something with the Army, Navy, and Air Force. In other ways the group met the usual requirements. The Secretary of State was placed in the tradition of Root, Hughes, and Stimson—other New York lawyers with great public careers. In Humphrey, the Treasury was getting a businessman not from Wall Street. The Agriculture and Interior posts, as usual, went to the West. Mrs. Hobby honored women and the Eisenhower Democrats of the South. Brownell and Summerfield were political managers receiving the traditional rewards.

In factional terms, it was predominantly a "For Eisenhower Before Chicago" cabinet, emphasizing ties with the Dewey rather than the Taft wing of the party. Dulles and Brownell were original Dewey men. Humphrey and Wilson typified the leaders of big corporate enterprise who had joined the Dewey followers to back Eisenhower in 1952, being more interested in the prospect of victory than in the pure Republicanism of Taft. McKay and Summerfield were state politicians who, whatever their ideological bent, had rendered valuable service to the Eisenhower movement. Only Stassen was a factional leader in his own right, and he was considered well to the left of Republican center.

Senator Taft seemed a little startled by these appointments, particularly at having Humphrey plucked right out of his Ohio back yard. Privately he regarded Humphrey as an apostate, a former Taft man who had crossed over to the other camp during the 1952 pre-convention campaign.[10] He had recommended giving the Treasury to Virginia's conserv-

[10] William S. White, *The Taft Story* (Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 207-08. Presumably Taft was told of this appointment when he visited Eisenhower the day before

ative Democrat, Senator Harry F. Byrd. The relatively nonpolitical Benson was the only appointee who had been on the Taft list of suggestions. However, Taft said he was gratified by this appointment and "acquiesced" in the others.[11] Later it was reported that other senators had been just as surprised as Taft. In some instances, Eisenhower headquarters had neglected the usual courtesy of clearing with or giving advance notice to senators from the appointees' home states.[12]

Setting to Work

The first appointees (except McKay, who stayed on the West Coast to terminate his governorship) set to work within the next few days. As each reported to the Commodore, he received the McKinsey and Company report on his agency. These documents identified and briefly described the duties of the most significant positions that would have to be filled by the new administration. Some of the recipients of the reports immediately requested consultations with representatives of the McKinsey firm to get additional information about the positions, the individuals then occupying them, and the places to look for replacements.[13]

Several of the future cabinet members made early visits to Washington to confer with Republican members of Congress, Dodge and Lodge, and officials of the agencies they were to head. Wilson visited the Pentagon on November 26, to talk with Lovett and others. George Humphrey had a cordial meeting with Secretary Snyder on December 3. Dulles spent December 3 and 4 in Washington for a round of conferences with Acheson and other officials of the State and Defense departments. He was given five volumes of briefing material and told that the resources of the State Department were at his disposal. Dulles said that while he would seek to inform himself on policy, he did not wish to be consulted on departmental decisions before inauguration except in a grave emergency.[14]

In New York, Eisenhower devoted time to some of the policy issues coming up. One of these concerned the direct federal controls imposed

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it was announced, but from all indications he was told after the arrangement was made rather than asked to approve in advance.

[11] *New York Times* (Nov. 25, 1952).

[12] *Washington Post* (Dec. 16, 1952).

[13] *Ibid.* (Dec. 5, 1952). Personal interview, John J. Corson, July 28, 1959.

[14] *New York Times* (Dec. 6, 1952).

on the economy at the outbreak of the Korean war. The legal authority for the President to set ceilings on prices and wages would expire on April 30, and the controls on other aspects of production, use of materials, and credit would die on June 30 unless renewed. The control program had become increasingly unpopular with Congress and the public, and there were sharply divided opinions as to the necessity for its prolongation.[15] Eisenhower had promised to end controls as soon as possible and was now urged to proceed by executive action as soon as he reached the White House. He set up a staff committee to study the feasibility of such action.[16]

Reorganization

Another subject to which Eisenhower turned his attention before leaving for Korea was administrative reorganization. He and other Republicans had spoken frequently during the campaign of their determination to put the government in order and have an efficient administration. There was no dearth of plans and proposals. Many of the recommendations of the Hoover Commission, which had been expected to provide the blueprints for Dewey reforms four years earlier, still were not acted on. The National Planning Association circulated a plan for revamping the Executive Office.[17] The respected scientist Vannevar Bush urged a reorganization of the Defense Department. Proposals were advanced for other departments and agencies. Some of them merited serious consideration as objective, well-considered plans, while others had more than a taint of self-interest.

One of the most formidable reorganization enterprises was the Temple

[15] By December 1952, the control program was in serious difficulty. Truman's second director of price stabilization in only a few months had just resigned in frustration, saying that legislative tinkering had made the law unworkable. *Ibid.* (Nov. 25, 1952). The Wage Stabilization Board blew up with the resignation of the chairman and industry representatives over a coal mine wage increase that Truman authorized contrary to the board's recommendation. Truman explained this publicly by saying that he did not want his successor to inherit a national coal strike. Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 4, 1952); *Sunday Star* (Dec. 7, 1952). Inside the administration there was some sentiment for a sharp cut-back on controls, but Truman took the view that it would be irresponsible for him to relinquish any powers that his successor might need. Personal interview, Henry H. Fowler, July 19, 1960.

[16] Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[17] See Bradley D. Nash, *Staffing the Presidency* (1952).

Survey. This was a venture of Robert L. Johnson, President of Temple University of Philadelphia, who had been national chairman of a citizens committee to publicize the Hoover Commission report. In mid-October, with Republican prospects growing brighter daily, he launched a new effort, supported by foundation and other private funds, ". . . to bring the Hoover Reports up to date and prepare guidelines for continuing reorganization in the new Administration."[18] Johnson hastily assembled a temporary staff of administrative experts, publicity men, professors of public administration, and civil servants who took leave for the purpose. Shortly after election, voluminous task force reports following the Hoover Commission pattern, culminating in over 200 recommendations, began reaching the Commodore. It was perhaps fortunate that these recommendations were confidential. While some of them might have been executed without difficulty, others contained political dynamite that would have brought down on the new administration the full weight of many big pressure groups and their congressional friends.[19]

Faced with this massive report, and under great pressure to do something about these and other reorganization proposals, President-elect Eisenhower prudently established a committee. Its chairman was Nelson A. Rockefeller, an active campaign supporter. The other members were Arthur S. Flemming, president of Ohio Wesleyan University, and the President-elect's brother, Milton S. Eisenhower. The official mission of the Special Committee on Government Organization was to sift proposals and advise the President-elect. Unofficially, it would serve the purpose of absorbing the pressure from the zealous reorganizers. The group had its first meeting at Eisenhower's home on Morningside Drive on November 30.

[18] Robert L. Johnson (director), *The Temple University Survey of Federal Reorganization,* Vol. 1 (1953), p. 5.

[19] In addition to many changes in the Executive Office, which were probably politically feasible whatever their wisdom, the reports recommended such steps as transferring the Bureau of Land Management from the Department of the Interior to the Agriculture Department, transferring the Army Engineers' civil functions to the Interior Department, transferring most of the functions of the Veterans Administration to other agencies, consolidating the regulation of air, railroad, and water transportation in a single agency, and transferring the National Labor Relations Board and the Federal Mediation Service to the Department of Labor—but only after statutory changes that would reorient the department from "wage earners" to the "general public." *Ibid., passim.* For a summary of the proposals made at the time the reports were made available to the general public, see *Washington Post* (Dec. 11, 1953).

More Appointments and an Explosion

After a few days' delay there were more appointments. On November 29, it was announced that Henry Cabot Lodge would become chief delegate to the United Nations. The next day came the designation of Winthrop W. Aldrich, a New York banker, to be Ambassador to Great Britain. By this time, appointments to the future White House staff of Vandenberg (who later withdrew for reasons of health), Hauge, Hagerty, Stephens, and General Wilton B. Persons (a veteran Army legislative liaison officer) had been announced.

On the first of December the cabinet was completed. The Secretaryship of Commerce was assigned to Sinclair Weeks, son of President Harding's Secretary of War, a Boston businessman long active in Republican politics. Weeks had been chairman of the 1952 campaign finance committee.

For Secretary of Labor there was a real surprise. The Eisenhower political strategists had decided to give this post to a labor leader, in order to counterbalance the heavy business composition of the cabinet and possibly expand the small Republican enclave in the AFL. After consultation with George Meany and other AFL leaders, the choice had been Martin P. Durkin, president of the plumbers and pipefitters union. This was despite the fact that Durkin was not only a registered Democrat but had overtly supported Stevenson!

These last appointments apparently came as a complete surprise to Senator Taft, who made no effort to conceal his displeasure. "The appointment of Mr. Durkin is an incredible appointment," he said in a public statement. "It is an affront to millions of union members who had the courage to defy the edict of officials like Mr. Durkin that they vote for Stevenson."[20] Democratic partisans gleefully interpreted these appointments as an insult direct and deliberate, the beginning of open conflict between Eisenhower and the more conservative Republicans. Sages like Walter Lippmann and David Lawrence saw it as an inadvertent blunder and lectured Eisenhower on the nuances of factional politics and

[20] *Washington Times-Herald* (Dec. 3, 1952). While he made no public comment on Weeks, there were rumors that Taft was equally unhappy over that appointment because Weeks, originally a Taft man, had supported Eisenhower during the campaign for the nomination. For example, Drew Pearson, "Ike Preferred Early Taft Break," *Washington Post* (Dec. 6, 1952); Stewart Alsop, "Ike-Taft Conflict Lulled for Present," *Ibid.* (Dec. 22, 1952).

legislative-executive relations.[21] In the next few days Durkin and the Eisenhower staff proceeded on tiptoe, saying only that they hoped for pleasant relations with Taft. The Senator had little more to say. Apparently, he regarded the Durkin appointment as a result of bad advice to Eisenhower by the Dewey people, and a personal affront as well, but not a fundamental violation of Republican principle.[22] After a few more grumbling statements by conservative Republicans, the fuss subsided.

TO KOREA AND BACK

Eisenhower himself missed the uproar: he was already in Korea. Early on November 29 he had slipped out of New York on a military plane, accompanied by C. E. Wilson, Brownell, Hagerty, General Bradley, General Persons, and Colonel Carroll. Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Navy Commander of the Pacific area, joined the group on the way. Under tight security, Eisenhower arrived in Seoul on December 2 and spent three busy days touring the battle fronts and conferring with American and Korean officials. Just before leaving Korea, Eisenhower met the press.[23] He emphasized that he had come to listen and learn about the situation; he had no panacea for ending the war and acknowledged the difficulty of finding a solution "that would bring a positive and definite victory without possibly running the grave risk of enlarging the war." While he admitted that there was not perfect understanding among the United Nations participating countries, and that it was difficult to state the objectives of the war in "definite, concrete terms," he reiterated that "we are all here to see it through."

[21] David Lawrence, "Clumsiness Seen in Choosing of Cabinet by Eisenhower," *New York Herald Tribune* (Dec. 3, 1952); Walter Lippmann, "Politics Without Tears," *Ibid.* (Dec. 4, 1952). Both of these columnists were in agreement that Eisenhower had owed Taft at least advance warning of the Durkin appointment, if not the power of veto. This was, after all, an appointment to which the author of the Taft-Hartley act was bound to be sensitive, and to turn it over for negotiation by Brownell, the arch-Deweyite, was anything but thoughtful. Lippmann pointed out that both in this and the Morningside Heights incident Eisenhower had made the mistake of not taking his relationship with Taft seriously enough. He also would have to get over his habit of handling delicate political matters on a "staff command" basis.

[22] White, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-11.

[23] Although it was described as a "press conference," Eisenhower merely appeared and read a short statement. No questions were permitted, much to the displeasure of the non-American correspondents who had been kept away from the President-elect during his visit.

The censors released the first dispatches on the visit soon after Eisenhower left Korea on December 5. Until then, Adams and the staff remaining at the Commodore had been keeping up pretenses, doling out announcements of visitors and appointments, and—with some assistance from the press—preserving the public illusion that the President-elect was still busy in New York.

On the "Helena"

At Guam the Eisenhower party switched from a transport plane to the Navy cruiser *Helena,* which offered relatively comfortable surroundings in which to recover from the exhausting pace of the preceding week. The next day at Wake Island there was a shuffle of passengers. Wilson, General Bradley, and Admiral Radford flew ahead for military talks at Radford's Pearl Harbor headquarters. But others were waiting to board the *Helena:* secretary-designates Dulles, Humphrey, and McKay, budget representative Dodge, and General Lucius Clay. Emmett Hughes and C. D. Jackson also were in the party to consult Eisenhower and pick up ideas for his inaugural and State of the Union addresses.[24]

In the three days that it took to reach Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower and his aides had the first serious policy discussions of the new administration. Only fragmentary second- and third-hand accounts are available, but it was evidently agreed that the Korean War should be ended by accepting the military stalemate and territorial division of the country if the communists would conclude an armistice agreement on otherwise honorable terms. Any other solution would be too costly and too risky. However, it probably would be necessary to maintain the pressure in Korea, and even to threaten more drastic action elsewhere, in order to bring the Chinese to terms.[25]

Assuming the war ended, most of the talk revolved around what was to be the key policy issue of the two Eisenhower administrations. In-

[24] In a letter to one of his subordinates, dated Dec. 1 and apparently written on the plane en route to Korea, Eisenhower had indicated the subjects most on his mind at the time and given some suggestions for work to proceed in his absence. The topics included appointments, his first message to Congress, early legislation to be recommended, and plans for reorganization. "Eisenhower Letters," *Life* (Mar. 16, 1959), p. 110.

[25] The most complete account of the *Helena* talks, apparently based on information direct from some of the participants, is Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," a four-part serial in *Fortune* (January, February, March, and April 1956).

siders soon called it the Great Equation—the problem of striking a proper long-range balance between military and economic strength. With the beginning of the Korean war, major national security expenditures had increased radically, causing budgetary deficits and sending the economy into an inflationary phase. Additional major expenditures for defense equipment and installations had been planned by the military and authorized by Congress; because of the "lead time" required, this program would extend through 1955. Furthermore, the Truman administration recently had come reluctantly to a conclusion, which presumably was embedded in the NSC papers that Eisenhower had been given, that startling growth in Russian technology and weapons capability required vastly increased outlays for continental air defense and guided missiles.[26]

The prospective cost of these programs gave Eisenhower much concern. It was clearly necessary for the United States to maintain the military means to defend itself, deter communist aggression, and secure its vital interests overseas. The military effort would have to be continued over a long period of time and, ideally, would be based on strategy and technology permitting a stable effort rather than a wasteful crash-cutback-crash pattern of military spending. But Eisenhower and his advisers, particularly those from the world of business, were convinced that American security did not rest on military power alone. In the long run, they felt, American strength required a healthy economy. In their view, defense was something subtracted from the civilian economy. Prolonged heavy defense expenditures produced deficits, inflation, and high taxes, discouraged investment and economic growth, sapped the economy, and eventually would weaken the nation's military potential. While there were different shadings of opinion about what the military requirements were, what the civilian economy would tolerate, and what degree of interference with individual freedom was defensible, all of Eisenhower's advisers leaned toward the civilian side. If a military-diplomatic rationale could be found, the American public and economy would be relieved in some measure from the demands being made by the Truman administration.

Within this general framework, the men on the *Helena* groped for a military-strategic doctrine. Dulles had begun to develop what later became known as the "massive retaliation" concept. The theory was that if

[26] Joseph and Stewart Alsop, *The Reporter's Trade* (1958), pp. 61-62, 198-200, write knowingly of this latter "time bomb" as "NSC-141."

small nations exposed to Soviet pressure could be made strong enough to suppress internal communist-led uprisings and resist external attack long enough to make it clear that aggression was occurring, the threat of bringing American air-atomic power into play would deter the Soviets. The recently enhanced prospect of an American H-bomb must have increased the attractiveness of the idea. This sort of thinking was highly compatible with the military views Admiral Radford had been expounding. Radford thought the United States was overextended, with too much of its power pinned down on the Asian periphery; he advised letting allies hold the front lines and concentrating American power in mobile central reserves. Most of the military policy of the Eisenhower administrations would spring directly from the *Helena* talks.[27]

The Economic Outlook

Joseph Dodge, who had from the beginning been less optimistic than his colleagues about quickly achieving major reductions in federal expenditures, brought unhappy news from the Budget Bureau. It would be difficult, almost impossible, to get the next budget into balance. Truman presumably would recommend expenditures of about $80 billion. About 70 per cent of that would be for the military departments, atomic energy, foreign aid, and other major national security programs that could not be slashed carelessly or arbitrarily but would have to be cautiously pruned. Furthermore, a large proportion of the defense money would not be for current operations but for items like guns, tanks, planes, and military bases that had been authorized by Congress and ordered in previous years. Another 18 per cent of the budget would consist of other expenditures relatively uncontrollable in the short run, such as veterans benefits, farm price supports, interest on the public debt, and grants to state and local governments according to formulas fixed by law. A final 12 per cent of the budget was in a "softer" category of miscellaneous and general government expenses. The outlook was for a cash deficit of about $10 billion if the tax cuts then scheduled by law were allowed to go through. This would bring the national debt against the statutory debt ceiling. Furthermore, the outlook was for continuing large deficits over the next two or three years as bills continued to come in for the big defense buildup that had been authorized at the beginning of the

[27] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

Korean War. While some cuts in the Truman budget undoubtedly could be made, Eisenhower would have to be careful not to promise too much.[28]

Eisenhower gave C. D. Jackson a note on fiscal policy for the State of the Union address. It called for "immediate and radical" change of objectives but recognized that the delicate balance of the economy made it necessary to "proceed cautiously and slowly" toward those objectives.[29]

Next came the question of economic controls. Humphrey, Clay, and others were for announcing decontrol immediately after inauguration. They were confident that once free of governmental restraint, the economy would increase in productivity rapidly enough to supply all essential materials without significant price increases, despite the dire warnings of inflation that were being heard. Although indicating firm belief in the principle of a free economy, Eisenhower was cautious. He sent a radio message asking future Commerce Secretary Weeks to take charge of the staff inquiry that was already under way on this subject and be prepared to recommend by January 10 a "schedule for future action" on direct price, wage, and other controls. He told Weeks: "As you know, we hope to discontinue such controls as this becomes possible in favor of indirect controls which, under a sound fiscal program, are much more effective."[30]

These high policy speculations aboard the *Helena* were in complete confidence. Although reporters were aboard, the only news from the first part of the trip was a dispatch saying that as an example of Republican economy Eisenhower had decided to get rid of the *Williamsburg,* the presidential yacht. It may or may not have been coincidental that the *Helena* had just passed through a spell of heavy weather.[31]

The Generals and the President

As the cruiser neared Pearl Harbor an incident occurred that further widened the breach between Eisenhower and Truman. It started with General Douglas MacArthur. The same day that Eisenhower had told his press conference in Korea that he had no panacea for ending the

[28] Murphy, in *Fortune* (January 1956), pp. 87, 206. John G. Morris, "Cutting Budget Poses Task for Eisenhower," *New York Times* (Nov. 16, 1952), had earlier published a similar analysis.

[29] Donovan, *op. cit.,* p. 55.

[30] Murphy, in *Fortune* (February 1956), p. 112. Donovan, *op. cit.,* p. 31.

[31] *Washington Post* (Dec. 7, 1952); Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 10, 1952).

war, General MacArthur, speaking to the National Association of Manufacturers in New York, had hinted that he did have one. "While it is well known that my own views have not been sought in any way," he said, "yet I am confident there is a clear and definite solution." He gave no details, saying that it involved, ". . . basic decisions which I recognize as improper for public disclosure or discussion. . . ."[32] Eisenhower on the *Helena,* hearing of this speech, decided to find out what MacArthur had in mind. He sent him a message saying in part: ". . . I am looking forward to informal meetings in which my associates and I may obtain the full benefit of your thinking and experience."[33] MacArthur immediately responded. "You knew, without my saying, that my service is, as it always has been, entirely at the disposal of our country. My best to you, Ike."[34] On December 9, Hagerty released these messages to the reporters on the *Helena.*

When President Truman learned of this exchange, he had his press secretary make a statement that if anyone had a reasonable plan for ending the Korean War, it was his duty to present it to the proper authority —the President—at once. The next day in his press conference, Truman went further. In response to questions, he said he doubted that MacArthur had anything new to offer; he himself had once taken a 14,000 mile trip to see MacArthur, only to get a lot of misinformation. As for Korea:

> Q.— . . . [Were you] urged during the campaign to announce you would go to Korea . . .?
>
> A.—Truman said yes, and he had decided it wouldn't serve any purpose and would be just a piece of demagoguery, and that was what it turned out to be.
>
> Q.—The current trip [by Eisenhower] is a piece of demagoguery?
>
> A.—The President said yes, the announcement of that trip was a piece of demagoguery, and then, of course, Eisenhower had to make it. Some good might come out of the trip; if it did, the President would be the happiest man in the world.[35]

Eisenhower made no public comment, but this renewed questioning of his sincerity of motive for the Korean trip apparently heightened his anger at President Truman. A reliable source in his headquarters

[32] *New York Times* (Dec. 14, 1952).

[33] This was apparently contrary to the advice of some of his companions, who could see no reason to get involved with MacArthur. Donovan, *op. cit.,* p. 19.

[34] *New York Times* (Dec. 14, 1952).

[35] *Ibid.*

was quoted as saying that this meant "the finish of any informal cross-the-desk meeting" between the two. If they met again prior to inauguration "it probably would be a cold affair."[36]

The *Helena* arrived at Pearl Harbor on December 11. Eisenhower rested and had a long conference with Admiral Radford. Charles Wilson, who had seen a good deal of Radford in the previous few days, was by now urging that he be appointed to succeed Bradley as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Eisenhower left Hawaii on the 13th and arrived in New York the next afternoon, two weeks and a day after his departure. His statement to reporters who met him at LaGuardia Field struck a note that was to be sounded with increasing insistence during the next few months as his administration sought to bring the Chinese communists to terms on a Korean armistice: continued stalling might make it necessary for the United States to strike at places and by means of its own choosing.

BACK IN NEW YORK

During the President-elect's absence, planning had gone ahead for the January 20 move to Washington. Some of the planning was on the distaff side. On December 1, Mrs. Eisenhower had visited the White House for the usual tour of the mansion and discussion of domestic matters with Mrs. Truman.

Sherman Adams, who had been designated top man on the future presidential staff before Eisenhower's departure, took advantage of the interlude to work on arrangements for the turnover of the White House offices. On December 5, Adams visited the White House for a talk with John Steelman and a tour of the establishment. It had already been arranged that Steelman would remain on duty as a consultant for several weeks after inauguration. A little later, Adams designated Roger Steffan, a retired New York bank vice president, who moved into the White House as advance agent, to expedite the moving and handle other administrative details.

During this period Adams also talked to reporters of his determination to make the Eisenhower offices outstanding in efficiency. While he was in Washington, he consulted members of the firm that had made the analysis of the new administration's executive personnel requirements

[36] *Washington Post* (Dec. 14, 1952).

and asked for additional work on White House staff organization and related matters.[37]

The Future Commander-in-Chief

Eisenhower's post-Korean schedule was not quite so crowded as that of the preceding month, but it was rigorous enough. One of the first tasks was to fulfill his commitment to consult General MacArthur. This posed a protocol problem. It would not do for the President-elect to go to the General, but it might embarrass the General to wait on his ex-aide. Finally a meeting was arranged on neutral ground—the home of John Foster Dulles. Eisenhower and MacArthur had a long conference there on December 17. The substance of the talk was not disclosed.

Eisenhower also followed up on the *Helena* talks by retaining Robert Cutler, a Boston fiduciary and sometime member of the campaign staff, as a special assistant for national security affairs. Cutler had served during World War II on Secretary Stimson's staff, was a reserve brigadier general, and had seen brief service with the Psychological Strategy Board. He immediately began to consult officials of the State and Defense departments and the National Security Council. By inauguration day the NSC staff was preparing for a thorough review of foreign and military policy by the new administration.[38]

The Party Leader

Republican party relationships also demanded attention. The day Eisenhower got back to the United States, Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas, one of his closest supporters among the Republican legislators, had a long talk with Senator Taft in Washington. The next day, Carlson and Senator Alexander Smith of New Jersey, another strong Eisenhower supporter, called at the Commodore. According to reports, they emphasized to Eisenhower the seriousness of the affront to Taft implicit in the Durkin appointment, and particularly in the way it was done. It was well known that many of the Republican senators were disturbed at the way the cabinet selections had been handled. The large role accorded

[37] Personal interview, John J. Corson, July 28, 1959.

[38] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 19, 1952); Murphy, in *Fortune* (February 1956), p. 112; James S. Lay, Jr., "Memorandum for the President," Jan. 9, 1953 (From the files of Charles S. Murphy, Harry S. Truman Library).

Brownell, and the sort of men appointed, made it appear that the cabinet-making had been largely turned over to the Dewey group. The fact that senators had not received the courtesy of consultation and advance notice increased their resentment. Despite this, Taft and most of the senators were anxious to make the administration a success and would cooperate if handled properly.

Fortunately, a way to improve relationships was at hand. The question of who would be majority leader of the Senate was not yet settled. The senior Republican, H. Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, had acknowledged his availability, as had a much younger man, Senator William Knowland of California. There also had been talk that the liberal-internationalist senators close to Eisenhower would sponsor a candidate, perhaps Duff of Pennsylvania. But the choice of most of the Republicans —the man who would be the real Senate leader in any case—was Taft. Taft wanted the post but would not announce for it if there was a prospect of direct or indirect opposition from the President-elect. The upshot was that Carlson and Smith emerged from their conference with Eisenhower and told reporters that the President-elect had no objection to any of the men being discussed and did not intend to interfere in this strictly senatorial matter; *they,* however, were supporting Taft. This, in effect, was giving the nod. Two days later, Taft formally announced his candidacy, saying that he was doing so only because he had been assured that Bridges really preferred the higher-ranking but less powerful post of President Pro Tem of the Senate, and that Knowland did not intend to be a candidate after all. That settled the matter. The Taft men were mollified, and Taft and Eisenhower had a renewed commitment to work together for the greater Republican good.[39]

One more party matter needed to be settled: a successor to Summerfield as national chairman. Shortly after Senator Carlson's visit to Eisenhower, it was reported in Washington that the President-elect had approved the choice of Wesley Roberts, who had been director of organization for the national committee during the campaign. Roberts, in addition to being in line for a promotion, was a "natural choice" in political terms. As an experienced organization man at the state level—a former state chairman—he was the sort of chairman with whom the party professionals felt comfortable. At the same time, his Kansas origins and

[39] *Washington Post* (Dec. 20 and 21, 1952); *New York Times* (Dec. 20 and 21, 1952); White, *op. cit.,* p. 213.

close ties to Senator Carlson gave him the look of an Eisenhower man.

As the remainder of December slipped away, Eisenhower was busy with the miscellaneous cares of a President-elect. He conferred with members of his staff, interviewed prospects for important appointments, and had a session with his advisory committee on reorganization; received delegations such as the high-brow Committee on the Present Danger and various minority group representatives; and found time to congratulate a high school science contest winner, receive a cake baked by Denver home economics students, and do other publicity chores. One more matter was taken care of. Until now, Eisenhower had had no formal religious affiliation. On December 19, he was called on by Rev. Edward L. R. Elson, minister of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington. Afterward, Elson announced that Eisenhower had authorized him to say that the next President would worship at his church.[40]

At the Cabinet Level

Meanwhile the process of staffing the top-level positions continued. Even before leaving for Korea, Brownell had announced that his former associate, William P. Rogers, counsel to an investigating committee of the Senate and now a Washington lawyer, would be Deputy Attorney General. The day Eisenhower and Humphrey returned from the Pacific, three key appointments to the Treasury were announced: Marion B. Folsom, an Eastman Kodak executive considered something of a "New Dealer" among businessmen because of his long interest in social insurance and his chairmanship of the Committee for Economic Development, for Undersecretary; W. Randolph Burgess of the National City Bank of New York, an authority on monetary matters and the Federal Reserve system, as Consultant and Deputy to the Secretary; and H. Chapman Rose, a Cleveland lawyer with Washington experience, for Assistant Secretary.

On December 19, after a conference with Charles Wilson, Eisenhower announced four key appointments in the Defense establishment: Wilson had chosen a fellow-executive at General Motors, Roger M. Kyes, to be his right-hand man as Deputy Secretary of Defense. Robert Ten Broeck Stevens, chairman of his family's large textile firm and prominent in New York business circles, was designated for Secretary

[40] *Washington Post* (Dec. 20, 1952).

of the Army. Secretary of the Navy went to Robert B. Anderson, a young Texas lawyer and businessman. Harold Talbott, a New York financier with important interests in aviation firms, the Chrysler Corporation, and other businesses, was designated Secretary of the Air Force.

Also on December 19, two important choices were made for the Department of Commerce: Walter Williams, a Seattle businessman and national co-chairman of the Citizens for Eisenhower, was announced for Undersecretary. Samuel W. Anderson, a New York banker with experience in both the Economic Cooperation Administration and the World Bank, was designated Assistant Secretary for International Affairs.

With the key appointments determined for several departments, arrangements for an orderly assumption of control appeared to be moving forward nicely. Even before Eisenhower's return from Korea, Secretary-designate Weeks had made a brief visit to the Department of Commerce. The Treasury group, all with considerable experience in and around the government, now moved into Washington to look over the situation and consult their predecessors and informed people. On December 20, Brownell and Rogers visited the Justice Department, where Attorney General McGranery gave them a tour of the building, a briefing on pending matters, and certain recommendations about the future organization of the department. There were exchanges of compliments for the benefit of the press, and it was agreed that Rogers, who already lived in Washington, would be Brownell's liaison man, with the full facilities of the department at his disposal, until inauguration. Oveta Culp Hobby made no appearance in Washington and, so far as is known, had no direct contact with her predecessor, the controversial Oscar Ewing. She was heard from mainly through press interviews in which she urged the greatest possible degree of local participation and control of social security programs instead of relying on "some faraway bureau." She also thought, "objectively and quite impersonally," that the Federal Security Agency, which she was to head, should become a regular cabinet department.[41]

On December 23, Wilson, who had visited the Pentagon briefly before going to Korea, returned with Kyes, Stevens, Anderson, and Talbott. They had lunch with the outgoing secretarial group, paired off with their opposite numbers for visits to various precincts of the Pentagon,

[41] Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 22, 1952).

and got a military briefing from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The process of consultation was getting started much later than Lovett had hoped; the new group would not be able to settle down for serious indoctrination until after the first of the year. Wilson, however, told reporters that both he and Lovett were "very anxious to make this transition in a very high-class way." There were indications that Assistant Secretary of Defense Wilfred McNeill, the top budget officer since Forrestal's time and generally considered the indispensable man at the Pentagon, would be asked to stay.[42]

Joseph Dodge continued to work at the Budget Bureau after his return from Korea. He also arranged for most of the future cabinet members, as they made their early visits to Washington, to come to the Budget Bureau to meet the top staff members and be briefed on budgetary procedures and the major budgetary, organizational, and policy issues pending in their particular departments. Several of the department heads later testified as to the value of this early "outside view" of their agencies. On January 3, it was announced that Dodge would remain as Eisenhower's Director of the Budget.

White House Liaison

Meanwhile, there was transitional activity, of a sort, at the White House. Steffan and Steelman worked out many procedural details of the turnover, such as disposition of files, security arrangements, and plans for shuffling the clerical force to make room for secretaries being brought from New York. Truman had secured funds in the current budget for a redecorating job, and under Steffan's direction the White House offices were repainted and new furniture was purchased. In the interest of future efficiency, the offices for the first time were designated with numbers, and the nameplates of key members of the Eisenhower staff were fastened to the appropriate doors.

However, the Eisenhower people showed relatively little interest in widening their contacts beyond housekeeping matters to take up the operating procedures and substantive business of the White House. Their apparent preoccupation with unimportant detail was a source of mystification, occasional amusement, and growing concern on the part of Truman's principal staff members. Except for Steelman, the Trumanites

[42] *New York Times* (Dec. 24, 1952).

planned to leave on January 20 and were fully prepared to spend a good deal of time before then getting their successors "informed to the point of action." Cutler was in touch with the NSC staff, Hagerty made a brief visit to look over the press room layout, and Hauge appeared briefly just prior to inauguration day. But with these exceptions the Eisenhower aides were either completely tied down in New York or uninterested in discussions with their predecessors. "The door was wide open," one of Truman's assistants said later, "but nobody came in."[43]

[43] Memorandum, Richard E. Neustadt (June 1953).

CHAPTER 33

AN END AND A BEGINNING

Fortunately, the final weeks of President Truman's term brought no crises to strain the limited communication system that had been built between the President and the President-elect. The outgoing administration sought mainly to preserve the status quo; the incoming group was preoccupied with its own affairs; and foreign friends and enemies alike chose to await the installation of a new regime with the effective power to negotiate and make commitments.

But while those weeks brought no emergencies, they were crowded with lesser events which, to those who participated in them or observed them closely, were rich with political significance. It was a rare moment of transition between a great era of the past and an unknown but certainly eventful future. Old policies and old relationships were crumbling; foundations of new ones were being laid. President and President-elect, congressmen and bureaucrats, lobbyists and columnists—all proceeded with subdued excitement, aware that in those fleeting days they were shaping the future, fashioning precedents that might long endure.

TRUMAN: EXIT AS STATESMAN

None went about his business more deliberately, more conscious of his historic role, than the outgoing President. Harry S. Truman was preparing a legacy in the form of a concept of the Presidency and an image of himself in it. After his outburst over Eisenhower's trip to Korea and

meeting with MacArthur, he subsided and spent the remainder of his term in an increasingly mellow mood. He was Truman to the end—conceding nothing to his enemies, occasionally irascible, and partisan when he thought partisanship appropriate. But mainly he played the genial good loser, content to relinquish the burdens of office because he was confident that history would rate his achievements highly, and presuming on this to give Dutch uncle lectures to the American people and their politicians (including his designated successor, should he happen to be listening). Truman's leading theme was the Presidency—the enormous responsibilities of the office, the importance of vigorous leadership by the one representative of all the people, and the duty of each incumbent to exercise and protect the powers of the office that he might hand them on undiminished to the next President. Truman thus interpreted his own frequently controversial conduct and at the same time warned Eisenhower against a reaction to the use of executive power.

As if to emphasize his feeling that the Presidency was bigger than both of them, Truman ignored the personal tension between himself and Eisenhower and performed courtesies that he felt any President owed a President-elect. He cooperated in Sherman Adams' program of preinaugural redecorating at the White House. He wrote letters to the congressional committees in charge of tax legislation, recommending changes in the law to mitigate the tax liability of future Presidents. He exercised his power as commander-in-chief to order Major John Eisenhower home from Korea to attend his father's inauguration. These were gestures of confidence and authority, not of self-effacement. At a press conference on December 18, a reporter innocently inquired if Truman would ride with Eisenhower to the Capitol on inauguration day. Truman instantly corrected him: On the way to the ceremony, the *President-elect would ride with the President!* Afterward, *the President* would return to the White House, and a certain private citizen would take care of himself.[1]

Arrangements for Turnover

Making the forthcoming transfer of responsibility an orderly one was now the primary objective of the Truman administration. Mr. Truman emphasized this to his subordinates and gave the instruction added point

[1] *New York Times* (Dec. 19, 1952).

by requiring each major department and agency to report to him what was being done in this respect.[2]

At the White House, Truman's principal messages to Congress were completed, except for the finishing touches, by the first of the year, giving time for cleanup of odds and ends of business. Items that could not be disposed of were put in shape to be passed along to the next administration. For example, the Civil Service Commission and Budget Bureau had agreed on an executive order that would help straighten out the unsatisfactory status of some 400,000 civil servants hired since the beginning of the Korean War, who by act of Congress had been held in a "temporary-indefinite" category. Truman decided not to issue the order, fearing that coming so late it might be construed as an attempt to "blanket in" some Democratic appointees. Instead, he sent the draft directly to Eisenhower, along with a personal letter explaining the background and commending the matter to his "early and careful consideration."[3] On another subject, relatively minor but with political implications, Truman chose not to address his successor directly but to leave his views on file. He addressed a memorandum to certain agency heads concerning negotiations being conducted with the Virginia Military Institute relative to establishing a research center on that campus to house the papers of General George C. Marshall. He asked these officials to bring this matter to the attention of their successors "as a matter of urgency." Truman's well-known resentment of the way the Republicans had treated General Marshall during the campaign rose to the surface, as he said: "I feel confident that they will wish to support the efforts that have been commenced to provide suitable recognition to one of the greatest Americans of our age."[4]

One of Truman's aides passed the word on resignations. Department heads were submitting resignations to Truman, which he would accept effective January 20. Each department head was reminded to agree with his prospective successor on the designation of a subordinate official who would have the powers of Acting Secretary until the Eisenhower ap-

[2] Harry S. Truman, circular letter to the department and agency heads, Dec. 31, 1952. A copy of this letter and the reports pursuant thereto are in the files of Charles S. Murphy, Harry S. Truman Library, and have constituted a valuable source for this study.

[3] See news story and text of the letter in Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 9, 1953).

[4] Harry S. Truman, "Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Administrator of General Services," Jan. 16, 1953 (From the Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library). It might be added that such an institution was later established.

pointee might be sworn in. Subcabinet officials who wished to go out with, or prior to, Truman should get their resignations to the White House by January 8. After that date, resignations addressed "to the President" and effective at his pleasure would be collected at the White House and turned over to Eisenhower.[5]

All of Truman's cabinet members remained to the end, but there was rapid attrition at the second and third levels between election and inauguration day. Assistant secretaries, ambassadors, and other officials almost certain to be replaced seized opportunities to make new connections. Some offices remained vacant and the departments improvised as best they could, which usually meant that only the most urgent matters got attended to, and there was a substantial backlog of business waiting for the new administration. Other vacancies were filled by promoting lesser political appointees. In a few cases there were highly political appointments of men with marginal qualifications to offices that attractive candidates were not interested in on such a short-term basis.[6] Career men were drawn up into some of these political positions, further blurring the already indistinct line between the career and political services.

Throughout most of the vast federal bureaucracy, the routine functions were performed as usual, but at the upper levels the processes of policy formation and decision making gradually ground to a halt. The budget was finished but would certainly be revised. Except for strictly technical matters, the preparation of legislative proposals—usually a big job at this time of year—had to wait for the new administration. Trumans' appointees gradually cleared their desks, bringing some long-pending matters to decision and putting others aside to await the new administration.[7] There was brisk activity in a few offices specifically responsible for preparing materials for the incoming officers, or where

[5] Donald S. Dawson, Administrative Assistant to the President, "Memorandum to the Heads of the Executive Departments," Jan. 5, 1953 (From the Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library).

[6] Perhaps the most noteworthy case was a recess appointment as Solicitor General of a young lawyer whose principal qualification seemed to be that his father had long been an important source of Democratic party funds. The appointment was made, it was reported, as a result of pressure on the White House and over the objections of the Attorney General. *Washington Post* (Dec. 8, 1952).

[7] This aspect of the transition merits much further investigation than has been possible in this study. It was possible, of course, for the outgoing officials to seek partisan advantage by deliberately leaving "booby traps," tough cases, for their successors to deal with, or by hastily making decisions in controversial cases that the next administration might find hard to undo. It is the writer's impression, however, that most Truman officials were quite conscientious and exercised good judgment in deciding which matters ought to be pushed to a conclusion and which ones should be deferred.

lengthy projects were being pushed toward a conclusion or final report by the Truman administration, but most of the upper bureaucracy lost its momentum and sense of direction. Some officials hedged and took protective action, and others made tentative preparations for what they suspected might be the new policies, but all had to wait for fresh instructions. Most of those who expected to stay in the government looked forward with pleasure to the advent of new superiors with strong political backing and effective influence with Congress.

Some Final Words on Policy

Toward the end there was a flurry of special reports and policy studies, as outgoing officials hurried to get their final views on record, and special presidential commissions turned in findings and recommendations. Most of these last testaments were destined only to gather dust, but a few were read with interest and profit by members of the next administration. Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett left a year-end report emphasizing the difficulties of achieving satisfactory civilian control of the military departments under the existing organization. His view of the trouble was that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other bodies supposed to give policy advice to the Secretary of Defense were composed of representatives of and claimants for the separate services. This made them log-rolling committees rather than agencies with a defense-wide point of view. The main solution indicated by Lovett was the one already advanced by Dr. Vannevar Bush and other critics: separate the planning from the command functions of the Joint Chiefs.[8]

On December 18, President Truman's Advisory Committee on Management reviewed the administrative progress of the previous three years and strongly urged that the President be given permanent authority to propose administrative reorganizations, subject to legislative veto. Although Eisenhower already had been advised of the importance of getting an extension of the existing temporary authority, this report drew additional attention to the subject.

Other major reports of the period involved policies subject to partisan debate. Following up the studies of an earlier presidential commission, the National Security Resources Board turned in a massive report on the national outlook for the future supply of industrial energy and

[8] *Washington Post* (Jan. 2, 1953); Walter Millis (with Harvey C. Mansfield and Harold Stein), *Arms and the State* (1958), pp. 370-71.

certain scarce materials. The report concluded with important policy recommendations touching water, timber, and land conservation, minerals policy, atomic energy, and other controversial subjects. President Truman's Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation issued a final report recommending a large federal program to bolster prepayment health insurance plans and expand medical research and health facilities. While the recommendations did not go so far as the controversial national health insurance proposal advanced by Federal Security Administrator Oscar Ewing, they were immediately attacked by the American Medical Association and other conservative spokesmen as a step toward socialized medicine. A presidential Commission on Immigration and Naturalization submitted a 300-page report which was, in effect, a refutation of the restrictive McCarran-Walter immigration act that had been passed over Truman's veto. One of the final documents was from the President's Committee on Government Contract Compliance, which had investigated racial discrimination by contractors serving the government. The report, with 22 recommendations for executive and legislative action, reached Truman on January 16. For reasons never fully explained, but possibly succumbing to an impulse to tease his successor, Truman sent a courier to Eisenhower on the day before inauguration with a copy of the report and a letter calling attention to its recommendations.

A President's Last Words

On January 3, the Eighty-third Congress convened, swore in new members, and was organized in both houses by the Republicans. On the 6th, the two houses met jointly, counted the electoral ballots submitted by the states, and declared Eisenhower and Nixon officially elected. In the Senate, the liberals made their biennial futile attempt to amend the rules so that filibusters could be stopped. The Republicans juggled the committee assignments to give themselves as much control as possible within their slim numerical majority. Senator Morse, who now called himself an Independent, was sent to the bottom of the list and, despite his vehement protests, relegated to minor committees. Another early piece of Senate business was to pass a resolution calling on the Civil Service Commission to furnish a list of all offices "not under civil service." Although the purpose was transparent, the Democrats let it go through by unanimous consent.

On January 7, Truman sent to Congress his final words on the state of the union. He did not address Congress personally; the message was read by clerks in the two houses. It was a moderate and generally uncontroversial document, intended to strike a keynote for his last appearances on the presidential stage. Truman called attention to the fact that the Presidency was on the eve of a "normal transition under our democratic system." He reported that with the "friendly and understanding collaboration" of General Eisenhower, arrangements had been made to ensure an orderly transition but without shifting any of the responsibility that must lie on the incumbent until January 20. This year, Truman said, he would not present legislative recommendations: "The presentation of a legislative program falls properly to my successor, not to me, and I would not infringe upon his responsibility to chart the forward course. Instead, I wish to speak of the course we have been following . . . and the position at which we have arrived."[9] Then came a lengthy review of the events of Truman's Presidency and the policies by which he had sought to deal with them. He called attention to major problems lying ahead, urged steadfastness in the face of the communist challenge, and warned against "the corrosive process" by which fear led to intolerance, suspicion, and destruction of freedom from within. In closing, he asked Congress and the nation to join him in supporting the next President.[10]

On January 9, Truman presented his budget, emphasizing in his message of transmittal the "unique circumstances" under which it had been prepared. He pointed out that the President-elect, through his representative, had been informed of the considerations entering the preparation of the budget, but no member of the new administration had participated in any of the decisions it reflected. "The President-elect has no responsibility for the amounts included in this budget, and will be entirely free, of course, to propose changes in them." Truman also noted that, contrary to the usual practice, the budget did not provide for either revenue or expenditures that might result from new legislation. (Ex-

[9] In this respect, Truman was following the recommendation of President Roosevelt, who said in his 1937 State of the Union message: "For the first time in our national history a President delivers his annual message to a new Congress within a fortnight of the expiration of his term of office. While there is no change in the Presidency this year, change will occur in future years. It is my belief that under this new constitutional practice, the President should every fourth year, insofar as it seems reasonable, review the existing state of our national affairs and outline broad future problems, leaving specific recommendations for future legislation to be made by the President about to be inaugurated."

[10] *Congressional Record*, Vol. 99, Pt. 1 (Jan. 7, 1953), pp. 234-41.

ceptions to this rule had been made for a few programs carried on under annual legislative authority, such as mutual security and certain defense production activities; it was assumed these would be renewed.) While a few items, such as the foreign aid request, appeared to have been somewhat inflated for the sake of making a record of devotion to particular programs, the budget was in general an "honest" budget, providing for continuation of existing programs at approximately their current levels. It requested authority to incur new obligations in the amount of $72.9 billion. Actual expenditures, however, partly from these funds and partly from previous authorizations, were estimated at $78.6 billion.[11]

Truman submitted his final major message, the economic report, on January 14. It contained a general review of economic progress in previous years, a discussion of achievements under the Employment Act of 1946, a statement of "basic economic principles" that should govern economic policy in the future, and an optimistic statement of the potentialities for economic growth at home and abroad.[12]

These official messages, although applauded for their dignity and moderation, attracted less attention than Truman's unofficial communications to the public. The President seized every opportunity to say goodbye, to exhibit his lack of bitterness, and to expound his philosophy of the Presidency. He spoke informally to several groups of government employees. Beginning in December he gave a series of exclusive interviews to reporters who had covered the White House. His press conferences gradually became love feasts. Through all this ran several themes: appreciation for the support he had received from both political appointees and civil servants, concern that strong executive leadership be continued, and hope that the entire nation would join him in giving his successor every possible chance to make good.

On January 15, Truman made a final report in the form of an informal radio and television talk to the American people. He told them how he had felt on the afternoon he became President, and how this event had changed his life. He reviewed the great events of his administration: the ending of World War II, the beginning of the cold war, the struggle to rebuild Europe and save it from communism, and finally the decision to fight aggression in Korea. In these great decisions, Truman insisted, the United States had been morally right; he was con-

[11] *Ibid.*, (Jan. 9, 1953), pp. 295-310.
[12] *The Economic Report of the President, 1953* (1953).

fident that the free world would survive and triumph. Now he was doing his best to ease the transfer of power to his successor and would return to private life without regret.[13] There was a last-minute surge of public affection for the plain-speaking man from Missouri who, whatever his shortcomings, had been a conscientious and courageous President.

But Truman remained Truman to the end. The next day he signed an Executive Order establishing as a naval petroleum reserve the controversial offshore oil lands, the "tidelands," which Eisenhower had encouraged the coastal states to believe might be ceded to them. Now let the Republicans have their Teapot Dome!

Portents of the Future

Public applause for Truman's sentimental farewell performances could not completely cover up the catcalling and ominous rumbling coming from offstage. While the President-elect and his immediate associates for the most part confined themselves to calm and cautious statements, Republican right wing forces about to be unleashed after twenty years of frustration openly prepared to slash, penetrate, and purge the bureaucracy and reduce the detested citadel of executive power. Their preoccupations ranged from grandiose to picayune. The National Association of Manufacturers heard and applauded various plans for drastic cuts in federal government functions and expenditures, reducing taxes, getting the government out of business, giving functions back to the states, and launching investigations of the Truman administration on a "mass production basis."[14] Representative John Taber of New York, House Appropriations Committee chairman (who earlier had characterized the invitation to Eisenhower to send a representative to the Budget Bureau as a "trap") announced plans for a staff of "minute men" to help his committee operate on the Truman budget. There were to be 40 (later he upped it to 75) fiscal experts, recruited from business and directed by a former F. B. I. agent, who would go over the budget and investigate conditions in the federal departments to see where cuts could be made. "Our people will drop in unexpectedly on Government employees to see whether they're working or loafing,"

[13] *New York Times* (Jan. 16, 1953).
[14] Report from NAM annual convention, Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 4, 1952).

said Taber.[15] As soon as Congress convened, a bill was introduced for a second Hoover commission, not merely to show how to perform existing functions more efficiently, as the first commission had done, but to identify federal activities that should be eliminated. At the demand of Representative Gross of Iowa, a noted foe of spending and all New Dealers, the Comptroller General served notice on Federal Security Administrator Oscar Ewing that he wanted a strict accounting and justification for the trip Ewing was making to India at government expense.[16] Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio, on behalf of himself and 61 other senators, including many Democrats, introduced a constitutional amendment to restrict the President's power to make treaties and executive agreements.[17]

There was increased agitation about communism and internal security. Between election and inauguration, a Senate subcommittee headed by Pat MacCarran of Nevada, a right-wing Democrat, put heavy pressure on the United Nations to do something about allegedly disloyal Americans on its staff. Finally, Secretary General Trygve Lie was forced to deal directly with the congressional committee, and eventually did fire several of the controversial employees. As soon as Congress convened, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin took over as Chairman of the Committee on Government Operations and established a permanent investigating subcommittee, with himself as chairman. With this almost unlimited hunting license, he began hiring a staff of investigators and making ominous threats about driving the "pinks" out of the government. The Truman administration itself took various steps in the loyalty-security field that suggested a desire not to leave any issues that could be exploited by the incoming Republicans. Owen Lattimore, one of the targets of McCarthy's earliest charges, was indicted for perjury. John Carter Vincent, a Foreign Service officer who had been a subject of previous investigations, was called before another loyalty board.

During all this talk of investigations, cutbacks, and mass firings, civil servants could take whatever comfort they might find in "reassuring" full-page ads in the Washington papers: "Bond's [clothing store] has complete confidence in the continued employment of present government personnel," asserted one establishment, which invited civil serv-

[15] *New York Times* (Nov. 9, 1952); see also *Ibid.* (Jan. 17, 1953) and (Feb. 23, 1953).

[16] *Ibid.* (Dec. 6, 1952).

[17] *Congressional Record,* Vol. 99, Pt. 1, (Jan. 7, 1953), p. 160.

ants to buy now and make no payments until March.[18] "We're not worried, why should *you* be?" demanded an appliance store, offering full return privileges on television sets if their purchasers were fired by the new administration.[19]

EISENHOWER: THE TEAM APPROACH

As the new Congress and the expiring Truman administration divided the stage in Washington, there was bustling activity at the "other White House" in New York. Eisenhower's January days were filled with staff conferences, meetings with distinguished visitors and delegations, and interviews with prospects for appointment. Every day brought new announcements of future undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, ambassadors, and other second- and third-level appointments. A sympathetic press called attention to these manifestations of Eisenhower efficiency; by all previous standards, this administration was going to be remarkably well staffed and organized by inauguration day. In their concentration on these arrangements, however, the President-elect and his associates seemed to forget that others in addition to themselves were directly concerned over what was being done; once again they were reminded of the facts of political life, the power of the Senate, and the persistence of Senator Taft.

A Warning

The first hitch was over the plans for handling the cabinet nominations. Eisenhower let it be known that he hoped the Senate would waive the formality of committee inquiry and confirm the cabinet on inauguration day. However, objections immediately were heard from the conservative Democrat Harry F. Byrd, who was not reckoned an enemy of the new administration. Recalling the controversies over alleged conflicts between the public duties and private interests of Andrew Mellon, William Woodin, and other cabinet figures of the past, Byrd expressed concern about the financial interests of the members of this widely proclaimed "businessman's cabinet." Because of the laws about "conflict

[18] *Washington Times-Herald* (Nov. 30, 1952).
[19] Washington *Sunday Star* (Dec. 7, 1952).

of interests," several cabinet nominees in recent years had been asked to divest themselves of stock in companies with which, as public officials, they might have occasion to do business. Byrd observed that the eminent and respectable gentlemen intent on cleaning up the mess in Washington presumably would take all necessary steps in this respect. Nevertheless, he thought it was the Senate's duty, in fairness to the nominees themselves, to give them a chance to state for the record what their private holdings were and what arrangements they were making. Byrd thought this worth doing even at the cost of a few days delay in getting the cabinet confirmed. It was apparent that a substantial number of senators, Republicans as well as Democrats, agreed with him.[20]

The Eisenhower people seemed to regard the problem as merely a procedural one, however, and a way was devised to get around the difficulty. Senator Knowland, chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, worked it out with the other committee chairmen and with Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the Democratic floor leader. The committees would hear the prospective department heads before inauguration, in anticipation of formal nomination. If the committees were satisfied, the Senate could by unanimous consent take up the nominations on inauguration day as soon as they were received.

The Commodore Agreement

Having made this arrangement for the convenience of the President-elect, Knowland and the other Republican senators took the opportunity to air a grievance that had been much discussed during the first days of the congressional session. The men and women being announced for various subcabinet and diplomatic offices were considered meritorious enough as individuals, but the bulk of them were "strictly Eisenhower" appointees. Despite the previous assurances to Taft, there were few Taft men, or even "regular Republicans," in the lot. Furthermore, the Senate was still being by-passed. The senators' recommendations, when they were asked to make any, apparently were not being taken seriously. Worse than that, senators were not being asked to clear prospective nominees from their home states. Even the minimal courtesy of advance notice was not being observed. For example, the reported choice of

[20] Arthur Krock, "The Matter of Confirming the Eisenhower Cabinet," *New York Times* (Jan. 8, 1953).

Douglas Dillon, a resident of New Jersey, as ambassador to France had come as a surprise to both Republican senators from his state. This way of proceeding might be a result of haste and carelessness, or it might reflect an intention on the part of Brownell and the Dewey group to get all they could while the getting was good, but in either case it would not do. Knowland announced that he, as chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, Millikin, as chairman of the Republican Conference, and Taft, as majority leader, would go as a delegation to call on Eisenhower to discuss this problem.[21]

They did so on January 12. All they said for publication afterward was that in the future Eisenhower would consult the senators and observe the courtesy of clearance.[22] Apparently, however, they received substantial assurances, which soon became known in Republican circles as the "Commodore Agreement." Not only were the senators to be consulted, but after inauguration they were to have the right to go directly to the departments with their personnel recommendations. This agreement, while it helped keep the peace with the Taft wing, was a source of much later difficulty in the administration's management of the patronage.[23] It also seemed to mark the beginning of an Eisenhower policy of making extraordinary efforts to conciliate Republican members of Congress.

The Commodore Cabinet

Meanwhile Eisenhower had taken the unprecedented step of calling the principal members of the future administration for two days of preinaugural meetings at the Commodore. They assembled on January 12 and 13—the Vice President, the department heads, the independent agency heads designated up to that time, and the principal members of the Executive Office and White House staff. The early discussion was mostly of inaugural plans. Eisenhower read and asked for comment on the latest draft of the inaugural address, which he had prepared with the aid of Emmett Hughes. The reading evoked compliments on the moral and literary tone of the speech and brief discussion of the issues implicit in its references to productivity, trade with communist nations,

[21] *Ibid.* (Jan. 10, 1953).
[22] Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 12, 1953).
[23] Philip S. Wilder, Jr., "The National Committee of the Party in Power, 1953-1958," Paper delivered at American Political Science Association (Mimeo., 1958), pp. 12-13.

the character of the Soviet regime, and other subjects. Officials of the inaugural committee explained the schedule for January 20. Eisenhower and the other cabinet members renewed their determination to wear short coats and dark Homburgs instead of the more formal attire that had long been customary at inaugurations.[24]

Later in the meeting there was business of a more substantial sort. Not surprisingly, in view of the recent visit by the delegation of Republican senators, Eisenhower mentioned the importance of getting along with Congress. If the administration showed a cooperative attitude, he hoped the Republican legislators would quickly get used to the idea of supporting an administration instead of opposing it.[25] Eisenhower also warned his colleagues against making appointments on the basis of alleged friendship with the President.[26]

Joseph Dodge presented a report on the budgetary situation that was no more optimistic than his first report on the *Helena.* It was going to be impossible to reduce expenditures enough to get either the Truman budget for fiscal 1954 or Eisenhower's budget for the following year into balance—unless, of course, Eisenhower proposed a tax increase. Otherwise, by drastic economizing and with a little luck, it might be possible to equalize income and outgo by the end of the second or during the third Eisenhower budget, in 1955 or 1956. The tax reductions already scheduled by law would make the situation worse if they were allowed to go into effect. This was a hard blow to many of those present, but there was nothing to do but put the best possible face on it and pledge to move toward the goal as rapidly as possible. Dodge had already made a public statement pointing out that the budget just going to Congress was entirely a Truman product and emphasizing the difficulties of making significant revisions in a short time.[27] Informally, he had made grim references in Washington to the unlikelihood of any "60-day miracles." Now he was instructed to return to Washington and make sure that the Republican congressional leaders who were talking about a balanced budget and tax cut the first year realized how impossible this was.[28]

[24] Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (1956), pp. 1-11.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[27] Joseph M. Dodge, "Statement on the Government Budget" (Bureau of the Budget press release, Jan. 6, 1953).
[28] Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," *Fortune* (January 1956), pp. 206-08.

Disappointment over the budget was assuaged somewhat by a report on economic controls that Weeks presented on behalf of a committee consisting of himself, Durkin, Hauge, and several economists they had consulted. The gist of it was that wage, price, and other controls could be abandoned almost immediately without significant inflationary effects. Humphrey, Wilson, and Weeks urged doing so right after inauguration. Others of the group, including Lodge and Stassen, were for delaying a few months to see if the Korean war could first be ended and to see how business would react to the new administration. While no commitment was made as to schedule, Eisenhower and most of those present favored rapid decontrol. It was agreed to take another look and try to fix a timetable immediately after inauguration.[29]

The decision to move rapidly on decontrols was apparently the only substantive decision of any consequence taken at the Commodore sessions. Getting acquainted, preliminary exchanges of views, and inauguration arrangements were the main activities. This was, however, a significant improvement over previous transitions, in which members of the cabinet did not meet each other—and sometimes not even the President—until inauguration day. The Commodore sessions gave the public confidence that Eisenhower had the situation in hand, and apparently contributed to the unusual morale and solidarity that characterized the Eisenhower "team" during its early years.

Confirmation Conflict

At the breakup of the Commodore meetings, the future department heads proceeded to Washington. In the days remaining before inauguration, they held consultations with the outgoing officials, studied the material that had been prepared for them, and investigated prospects for appointments under their respective jurisdictions. Most of them moved into offices in their departments during this period.

Another activity of the future cabinet members in the week before inauguration was to appear before the various Senate committees holding hearings in anticipation of their formal nominations. Most of these hearings were without undue incident. Dulles and one or two others were forced to acknowledge that they had perhaps used extravagant language during the campaign to characterize policies of the previous

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

administration, but this was to be expected; most members of the Senate, Democratic as well as Republican, showed no intention to make serious difficulties. One by one, the prospective nominees told how they had resigned from various public and corporate posts, sold stock, or made other arrangements to guarantee that they would not in any way be embarrassed in the course of their public duties.

But the hearing of Charles E. Wilson by the Armed Services Committee was another story. The main interest was in his connection with General Motors, the largest single contractor with the Department of Defense. Wilson testified that he was resigning as an officer of GM and going into retirement. However, he proposed to retain his stock in the company, worth about $2.5 million, and to draw his pension and certain stock bonuses based on previous earnings, which would come to him over the next five years. These payments would be completely automatic; there was no question of further obligation to the company, or any doubt in his own mind that he could serve the government faithfully. Suggestions that he sell the stock he rejected because of the large tax liability he would incur—something like $600,000, it was later estimated.

The senators found Wilson an unusual but not altogether satisfactory witness. He was candid enough. Completely self-assured, but inexperienced at appearing before committees, he neglected the rituals of subordination expected of executive witnesses and made off-the-cuff remarks. Once, for example, he casually referred to an "attempted shakedown" in connection with a congressional investigation of World War I airplane contracts in which Harold Talbott had been involved. He appeared to attach little importance to the conflict of interest statutes; he assumed that the committee could trust a man with his record to know the difference between right and wrong. The following exchange became famous:

> Senator Hendrickson: Mr. Wilson, you have told the committee, I think more than once this morning, that you see no area of conflict between your interest in the General Motors Corp. . . . and the position you are about to assume.
>
> Mr. Wilson: Yes sir.
>
> Senator Hendrickson: Well now, I am interested to know whether if a situation did arise where you had to make a decision which was extremely adverse to the interests of your stock and General Motors Corp. . . . in the interests of the United States Government, could you make that decision?
>
> Mr. Wilson: Yes, sir, I could. I cannot conceive of one because for years

> I thought what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa. The difference did not exist. Our company is too big. It goes with the welfare of the country. Our contribution to the Nation is quite considerable.[30]

Contrary to the rumors that were soon going around Washington, Wilson did not say directly that what was good for General Motors was good for the country. Nevertheless, his general attitude and casual dismissal of the problem raised by his stock disturbed the committee a great deal. Kyes, Stevens, Anderson, and Talbott also were heard by the committee, and while they were more discreet than Wilson, the fact was that all except Anderson owned and proposed to keep stock in companies doing business with the Department of Defense. Committee members and staff studied the question overnight but were unable to find any way around a statute in good standing that forbade anyone "directly or indirectly interested in the pecuniary profits or contracts of any corporation" from acting "as an officer or agent of the United States for the transaction of business" with such a company.[31] Furthermore, other cases could be recalled in which nominees had divested themselves of stock holdings in order to avoid any shadow of conflict. The committee did not take a formal vote, but Chairman Saltonstall reported that unless something were done about either the law or the stock, Wilson probably could not be confirmed.[32]

Then followed several days of frantic consultations between Wilson, Eisenhower and his advisers, and the Senate leaders. Wilson remained unwilling to dispose of his holdings. Some senators, including Taft, suggested amending the conflict of interest statutes. Others, including Carlson of Kansas, asserted that the law should stand, and if Wilson wanted to be confirmed, he would have to sell his stock.[33] As the debate went on, other senators and the influential columnists and editorial writers came increasingly to the latter view.[34] The matter remained unsettled as General Eisenhower broke camp at the Hotel Commodore and prepared to move to Washington.

[30] *Nominee Designates, Charles E. Wilson, Roger M. Kyes, Robert T. Stevens, Robert B. Anderson, and Harold E. Talbott,* Hearings before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, 83 Cong. 1 sess., (1953), pp. 25-26.

[31] *U. S. Code,* Title 18, Sec. 434.

[32] *New York Times* (Jan. 16 and 17, 1953).

[33] *Ibid.* (Jan. 19, 1953).

[34] For example, see editorial, *Washington Post* (Jan. 19, 1953); Walter Lippmann, "The Wilson Predicament," *Washington Post* (Jan. 20, 1953); editoral, *New York Times* (Jan. 19, 1953).

IKE'S INAUGURAL

The President-elect and his family traveled to Washington by special train on the evening of January 18, and on arrival were installed at the Hotel Statler. The holiday mood in Washington was unmistakable. The Republicans were coming back, after twenty years, and thousands of them were in town to celebrate the event, along with military units, high school bands, baton twirlers, cowboys, Indians, beauty queens, atomic cannons, and other exhibits for the inaugural parade. Although there had been muttering around the White House that it was the President's prerogative to set the style of dress, Eisenhower's initiative had carried the day; the Homburg was the thing. Washington's famed dress suit rental establishments, which boasted of being able to cope with any social emergency, packed away the spurned high hats and sought disaster relief from New York. The female fashion fad of the day was the "Mamie Bang," which the beauty parlors were providing at "$2 a hair-do if you curled your own and from $10.00 to $17.50 if you used store hair."[35]

Eisenhower spent the last day of waiting in seclusion at the Statler, conferring occasionally with his aides about the Wilson problem and other matters. He did not call at the White House, and according to Truman's recent revelation, declined the latter's invitation to an informal luncheon before the inaugural ceremony.[36]

Inauguration morning the future cabinet members and their wives joined General and Mrs. Eisenhower in special services at the National Presbyterian church. At eleven-thirty, the Eisenhowers were driven to the White House, where President Truman—wearing a Homburg—greeted them under the portico.[37] The ride to the Capitol was for the

[35] *Ibid.* (Jan. 18, 1953).

[36] Harry S. Truman, "The Day Ike Snubbed Me," *Look* (May 24, 1960), p. 26. According to one observer who had the privileges of the White House at the time, until the very last minute " Mr. Truman's hopes remained almostly boyishly high that a courtesy call would be paid." John Mason Brown, "The Trumans Leave The White House," *Saturday Review* (Feb 7, 1953), p. 10

[37] Another point of protocol on which there were post-inaugural arguments between Eisenhower and Truman partisans: Should Eisenhower have entered the White House to "pay his respects to the President"? This had been the custom, at least until it was waived because of Roosevelt's crippled condition in 1933. In this case, General and Mrs. Eisenhower made no immediate move from the automobile. According to some observers, they remained in the car until the President came outside, seemed to realize belatedly what they were expected to do, and stepped out just as Truman came down

most part a silent one.[38] Just before going out to the inaugural stand, Eisenhower asked who had ordered his son home from Korea to attend the inauguration; President Truman took full responsibility.[39]

The inaugural ceremony, conducted before the television cameras, followed the American political and religious tradition. The high officers of all three branches of the government, the governors of the states, and other dignitaries were present. Former President Hoover, now honored by all the nation, had a prominent spot on the platform. Accompanied by the Marine Band, a soloist sang the national anthem. There were Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish prayers. Vice President Nixon was sworn in by his fellow-Californian, Senator Knowland. Then Chief Justice Vinson administered the presidential oath to Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Eisenhower's inaugural address began on the religious note he had struck with increasing frequency in the past six months. He asked all to join him in a prayer that he himself had written that morning, after returning from church. The address itself was a general statement of dedication and assertion of ideals, with no partisan content and little indication of the program he intended to pursue. It seemed to be addressed to the whole world, not just the United States. The President summoned the people to meet the challenge of the time, under the guidance of such "fixed principles" as abhorrence of war, national honor, economic strength, equality of opportunity, self-determination for other nations, and interdependence of all peoples. Perhaps the most pointed passages were a call for Europe to "strive with renewed vigor"

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the steps. Other observers thought that Truman remained inside the door until he saw that the Eisenhowers were getting out of the car. It was rumored, in fact, that Truman had commented to his companions that if that so-and-so didn't get out of the car the inauguration could wait all afternoon. But according to Mr. Truman's recent account, when he was informed that General Eisenhower declined to come in, he went outside to greet him. *Cf.* Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[38] Mr. Truman recently has revealed that there was a tart exchange over the reasons why Eisenhower had not attended his inauguration in 1949—a point on which both men apparently had their facts wrong, because the newspapers had recorded that he did attend it. See *Look* (May 24, 1960), especially editor's note, p. 26.

[39] The precise nature and spirit of this exchange also remain unclarified. Published accounts shortly after the event, presumably based on what Truman had told others, indicated that Eisenhower had asked the question gruffly but in a way that suggested some appreciation for this courtesy, and that Truman had retorted wryly: "Just tell him that contrary old man in the White House did it." See John Mason Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 10; *New York Times* (Jan. 23, 1953). However, Truman's most recent memoir indicates that Eisenhower asked the question bitterly, charging an attempt to embarrass him by giving his son this special privilege. See *Look* (May 24, 1960), p. 26.

for unity, and a reference to the need for all nations to assume the "full and just burdens in the common defense of freedom."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, President and Mrs. Eisenhower entered the Capitol where they and the congressional inauguration committee consumed a hasty luncheon—also under the television cameras. Harry S. Truman, private citizen, slipped away to Dean Acheson's home in Georgetown, where he was greeted by a little band of noisy but misty-eyed Democrats. The Senate, Vice President Nixon presiding, reassembled in executive session. Eisenhower's nominations of his department heads, including Mrs. Hobby but excepting Mr. Wilson, were read. Majority Leader Taft moved to confirm them immediately, but Senator Morse objected, saying that the committee reports on the fitness of some of the nominees had been delivered only that morning and he needed time to examine them. Since under the rules it required unanimous consent to take a vote on the same day the nominations were received, and Morse refused to budge, the nominations had to be put over to the following day, much to Taft's disgust.

The President returned to the White House in time for the beginning of a five-hour parade, which he reviewed from a standing position almost the entire time. In the evening, the President and Mrs. Eisenhower made brief appearances at not one but two official inaugural balls. Then the President, plus a nation exhausted from almost twelve hours of watching the inauguration on television, went to bed. Harry Truman was already on his way to Independence, by the courtesy of his successor getting one last ride in the presidential railroad car.

So inauguration day arrived and passed, bringing the Republicans back to the national power they had sometimes despaired ever of regaining. The country was in a grave, perhaps even perilous, situation, but no emergencies arose to mar the festivities. In spite of the bitterness of the campaign and the strained personal relations between the outgoing and incoming Presidents, the transfer was carried off with at least the minimal amenities maintained. Party and factional strife for the moment laid aside, it was a day of affirmation of faith in American men and institutions, a truly national celebration. The future was indeterminate, but the public rested easier. Ike was in charge.

CHAPTER 34

AFTER TWENTY YEARS

The emotional release of inauguration day was followed by two quiet weeks in which the impact of the political overturn seemed to be held in suspense. President Eisenhower and his associates were busy settling in, filling the top offices, and cautiously exploring what could be said about program in a State of the Union address scheduled for February 2. Their conduct provided hints about the character of the new administration but no indications of purpose more conclusive than the broad statements of the inaugural address. The news was of minor and disparate events that suggested, if anything, newness on the job and a certain confusion of objectives among the Republicans. After a few days of this, Democrats who could recall the way FDR had exploded into action in 1933 could not resist gibing that it was turning out to be a pretty dull crusade. But Republicans interpreted what was not happening as evidence that Eisenhower was going to show the country how a truly competent leader got properly organized before he moved.

EFFICIENCY AT THE WHITE HOUSE

The activity around the White House offices tended to confirm the latter interpretation. The work of the Eisenhower advance man, Roger Steffan, resulted in a remarkably smooth transfer of staff and files from the Commodore. John R. Steelman, Truman's highest-ranking assistant, remained for several weeks as a consultant to help the new group get

settled in. Almost as a matter of course, Executive Clerk William Hopkins, heir to the tradition of anonymous career service established by Rudolph Forster and others, was retained in his post to put his unmatched knowledge of White House lore and executive branch procedures at the disposal of the new administration. President Eisenhower took additional steps to fill out his personnel roster. Former governor Val Peterson of Nebraska was added to the staff.[1] Several men with congressional staff experience were brought in to work on legislative liaison. There was a considerable shuffling and turnover of clerical staff, as room was made for secretaries brought from New York. Despite her wide reputation in Washington for efficiency and discretion, the chief telephone operator, Louise Hachmeister, was let go.[2]

Most of the reports from the White House featured the astringent Yankee personality of Sherman Adams, who had inherited Steelman's title as The Assistant to the President but was already exercising a primacy in the White House staff that Steelman had never enjoyed. Truman's White House was remembered as an informal, feet-on-the-desk establishment, hardworking enough but not much concerned about the pure science of management. Adams determined to eradicate all vestiges of Trumanism and set an example of efficiency for the entire administration. He sought the advice of management consultants on office layout and paperwork procedures. Presidential assistants were given standing assignments and functional jurisdictions far more specifically than ever before. Adams and Steffan (who now bore the title Director of Operations) poked into the corners to make sure that lesser members of the staff were busy at useful but not overlapping employment. White House business began promptly in the morning, and employees were warned about tardiness—or early leaving in the afternoon. Word was passed that Governor Adams did not like to see young ladies smoking at their work. For a while there were rumors that he was plotting to banish the press corps, which he regarded as an unmitigated nuisance, from its cherished quarters by the White House lobby to the Old State

[1] Peterson originally had been slated for ambassador to India, but Eisenhower refrained from making the nomination after Senator Hugh Butler, a Nebraska factional rival of Peterson, served notice that he would oppose confirmation. A few weeks later, Butler relented sufficiently to permit Peterson to be nominated and confirmed for the politically unattractive job of Director of Civil Defense.

[2] According to "Hacky," she was told the reason was that the record showed that she had worked at Democratic headquarters at New York in 1932 and came to the White House with the Roosevelt staff. Press Secretary Hagerty denied this had been relevant. Washington *Evening Star* (Feb. 10, 11, 1953).

(Executive Office) building across the street; but Press Secretary Hagerty apparently intervened.[3] Symbolizing the switch of household gods, portraits of Jefferson, Jackson, Wilson, FDR, and other Democratic patron saints were replaced with Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft.

ADDITIONS TO THE TEAM

The new department heads were on the job the day after inauguration but unconfirmed because of Senator Morse's parliamentary objection. Truman holdovers officially functioned for the day as acting secretaries. All the new secretaries except C. E. Wilson were confirmed that afternoon and sworn in at a White House ceremony in the evening.

On January 22, Eisenhower officially nominated Wilson to be Secretary of Defense. Before the Senate committee once more, Wilson said that he had reconsidered and was now willing to dispose of his General Motors stock. With a little more prompting from the committee, he also arranged with General Motors for a cash settlement in lieu of stock bonuses due in future years. Wilson promised to discuss fully with the President any matters about which there might be misunderstanding because of his previous affiliation. However, he found it difficult to dispel the unfortunate impression he had made earlier on the committee or to conceal his irritation at the ordeal he had been put through:

> Mr. Wilson: I really feel you are giving me quite a pushing around. If I had come here to cheat, by God, I wouldn't be here.
> Senator Russell: I'm sorry you feel that way, Mr. Wilson. I am not trying to push you around, but I have my responsibilities, too.
> Mr. Wilson: I understand that. But I am just human, and my God, I am making a great sacrifice to come down here.[4]

Nevertheless, the committee was now satisfied, and on January 26 Wilson was confirmed by a vote of 77-6.

Subcabinet and diplomatic nominations went to the Senate and were confirmed at the rate of about a half-dozen a day for the next two

[3] Merriman Smith, *Meet Mister Eisenhower* (1954), p. 125.

[4] Excerpt from the Senate hearings quoted in *New York Times* (Jan. 25, 1953). The reporter presumably saw the unedited transcript; the version in the printed hearings is somewhat milder in language.

weeks. Roger Kyes, Robert Stevens, and Harold Talbott, now also agreeing to sell their stock holdings, were included. As the nominations accumulated, the original preponderance of strictly "Eisenhower Republicans"—or, as the Taft men considered them, "Dewey Republicans"—was somewhat mitigated. Such cabinet members as Benson and McKay, who had not been in close touch with the Commodore group, tended to choose associates from the West and Midwest who were more acceptable to the congressional wing of the party. With the encouragement of the President, all of the department heads found at least a few places as assistant secretaries, bureau chiefs, or special assistants for Republicans with strong congressional sponsorship.[5]

Completion of the State of the Union address was a top priority task in the administration's first two weeks. The preliminary material brought down from the Commodore resembled the inaugural address in its reliance on generalities rather than concrete proposals. Eisenhower himself felt some concern about this, which was reinforced a few days after inauguration by the obvious disappointment of the Republican legislative leaders when they learned the situation. Taft and the others were eager for some legislative proposals they could get their teeth into.[6] To meet this problem, Eisenhower and his staff had long conferences with the department heads, key members of Congress, and other advisers in an effort to get agreement on some specific statements of priority and intent. These explorations and other events of the administration's postnatal days revealed clearly the wide differencies of expectation and approach, the latent conflicts between key groups, that were causing uncertainty and suspense in Washington.

CONFLICTING VIEWS

What did the party overturn really portend? For a whole generation of politicians, civil servants, and reporters this was a new experience. The old hands who could remember 1933 had no confidence that it

[5] The *New York Times* (Feb. 1, 1953) commented: "The patronage difficulty . . . is still in a state of latent inflammation. Republican Senators were seldom consulted about the top Eisenhower appointments; grimly and quietly they are demanding something close to full choice in filling the places down underneath." From all indications, the administration was disposed to go far toward acceding to these demands.

[6] Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower: *The Inside Story* (1956), p. 26; Richard Rovere, "Letter From Washington," *New Yorker* (Feb. 14, 1953).

would be like that again—everything had changed so much. What would the Republicans have to do to assure themselves control of the government? How much of the works of the past twenty years would they try to undo? How would Eisenhower handle the Russians, the Chinese, the European allies, Congress, the Republican right wing, and the bureaucracy? What would be changed first, and in what pace and temper? While few ventured to predict with certainty what *would* happen, there were many different ideas about what *could* or *should* happen.

The Bureaucracy and Its Expectations

One general viewpoint and set of expectations was characteristic of the upper civil servants, political office holders of long experience, and others who regarded themselves as old professionals in the operation of the government from the executive side.

It must be understood that the higher bureaucrat is ordinarily a moderate, even cautious man. This is not necessarily because of concern for his personal job security, although that consideration may at times be present, but mainly because of his long immersion in the complexities of government policy and its administration. He knows the tangled background of all the old issues and proposals in his field, the details of the current situation, and what the political and administrative consequences of the principal policy alternatives might be. To him, nothing is new and nothing looks easy. Whatever his personal views about the direction that policy ought to move, he normally thinks of change in terms of incremental adjustments over a relatively narrow range.

Thus the upper bureaucrats in 1953 regarded most of the policy arguments of the past twenty years as water over the dam. They waited, with their memoranda and briefing books, to show the Republican appointees the facts. After that, they presumed, they and the new bosses would discuss possible changes in policy. Since the hard realities of most situations left so few alternatives open, changes of a moderate sort—shifts of emphasis—were anticipated.

Within such a framework of expectations about policy, the bureaucracy looked forward to serving the new administration much as it had served the old one. This was particularly true of employees

under the merit system, a category that now included a great many of the administrative and policy-making posts just below the presidential appointee level. In many agencies even the exempt jobs were not very political in the usual sense, being often filled by men promoted from the civil service ranks or by others with long tenure and low partisan interest who regarded themselves as essentially professional administrators in their program fields. Some personnel turnover was, of course, expected. The new secretaries and assistant secretaries would want a few aides of their own choice, to replace individuals who had become personally identified with the political fortunes of their predecessors. Many of the upper bureaucrats would offer to resign or take new assignments at the secretary's pleasure. But the expectation was that in most cases these offers would not be accepted, or if accepted would be taken up gradually by mutual agreement after a suitable period of adjustment. The bureaucrats assumed that the new administration would need them. They could see no reason for a big turnover of personnel, except possibly in a few agencies touched by scandal during the Truman administration.

It was realized, of course, that all Republicans did not take this view of the policy situation or have such an idealized picture of the civil service; government programs and those who administered them had been under attack from the political right throughout the long Democratic tenure. But most of the bureaucrats, although nervous, thought things were likely to turn out all right. It was hard to believe that anyone would take seriously the extravagant statements made about the bureaucracy during the campaign. Most of this talk had come from the Taft wing of the party, but Eisenhower was a moderate—a career man himself, in fact. He and his appointees from the world of business would certainly put a high value on competence and stability. Having responsibility for running the government would be good for all the Republicans; with their President in the White House, irresponsible attacks on the bureaucracy should decline. And in any event, Eisenhower had come out of the election towering so far over his party that the threat of calling his immense public prestige into play should suffice to keep troublemakers in line. To those long accustomed to the leadership tactics of Roosevelt and Truman, it seemed almost inevitable that presidential power would be used in this way.

The Congressional Climate

Congressional attitudes, as might be expected, were considerably different from those dominant in the bureaucracy. Several groups and lines of thought were identifiable.

Congressional Republicans on the whole sought policy changes far more sweeping than the bureaucracy believed feasible. They were anxious to get on with reducing federal expenditures, freeing business from controls, cutting down or eliminating the welfare and other programs attributable to the New Deal, and reducing taxes. Some were suspicious of, if not altogether opposed to, large military and foreign aid expenditures. Many were not fully reconciled to the United Nations and the Western alliance; a few were "Asia firsters" and downright isolationists. Most Republican congressmen also did not accept the competence and neutrality of the bureaucracy at face value. They were loud in demanding a thorough purge to eliminate not only the loafers, crooks, and communist sympathizers they were sure could be found in great numbers, but also the New Dealers who had infiltrated the civil service. And with Republican predilections intensified by twenty years in the opposition, they looked forward to a reassertion of congressional power against the influence of the President and the executive branch.

The intensity with which Republican legislators held these views, and the extent to which they were willing to go to see them prevail over possibly less drastic courses recommended by the new President, varied among individuals. A few adventurers of the radical right, such as Senator McCarthy, were from the beginning openly contemptuous, apparently deliberately seeking trouble with the administration. Others, typified by such House committee chairmen as John Taber and Daniel Reed, intended to pursue ultraconservative courses with all the power they could muster. They were not out to embarrass the President, but they saw no reason they should defer to his judgment or subordinate themselves to his leadership.

In both houses, of course, there were "original Eisenhower men," who could be counted on to support the President in a course of moderate conservatism at home and internationalism abroad. Some estimates at the opening of the session showed the number of legislators "leaning to Eisenhower" as great as those "leaning to Taft." However, the Eisenhower bloc was not solid, and its membership did not include the Re-

publicans of long seniority who held strategic committee chairmanships and other leadership posts.[7]

Most Republican legislators wanted a policy swing to the right and were prepared to exert pressure to push the administration in that direction. Whatever their records at Chicago, they really had preferred Taft for President and were still a little suspicious of the Dewey men around Eisenhower. Nevertheless, they could not help but be impressed by Ike's hold on the public, and they recognized at least a vague interest in making this long-awaited Republican administration a success. Following the cues of Senator Taft and Speaker Joe Martin, they presented themselves as ready to cooperate with the President. However, they remained touchy over matters of legislative prerogative, and there were limits beyond which they would not support or tolerate faint-hearted Republicanism in the administration. Precisely where those limits were would depend on Eisenhower's ability to charm or bludgeon them into line.

Much depended, of course, on how Democrats voted. Although a strong numerical minority, they were so awed by Eisenhower's public standing and divided among themselves that they were unlikely to stand together firmly in opposition. On almost any issue, there was a prospect of substantial Democratic support for an Eisenhower position. The conservative southerners openly regarded Eisenhower as a considerable improvement on Truman; some had supported him in November. They would back him in moderate internationalism and on domestic issues if he swung to the right. The northern Democrats, although having

[7] One estimate at the opening of Congress showed the division as follows:

In the Senate

Eisenhower Republicans	19	Northern Democrats	25
Taft Republicans	19	Southern Democrats	22
Uncommitted Republicans (including Morse)	11	Total	47
Total	49		

In the House

Eisenhower Republicans	116	Northern Democrats	112
Taft Republicans	93	Southern Democrats	99
Uncommitted Republicans	12	Total	211
Total	221		

Clayton Knowles, "Blocs in Congress Key to Eisenhower Margin," *New York Times* (Jan. 4, 1953).

reservations about the strong business flavor about his administration, still were inclined to think favorably of Eisenhower. They expected to support him on international issues and join with moderate Republicans to help him block domestic reaction.

Another important point: Congress was *ready*. The men in the positions of power, the House and Senate leaders and committee chairmen, were seasoned veterans operating on familiar ground; they had well-developed ideas about what they wanted to do and knew precisely the places in the governmental machinery where they could make their influence effective. The new timing under the Twentieth Amendment increased their advantage, because by inauguration day the legislative session was almost three weeks old, the preliminaries were out of the way, and Congress was set for business. Already John Taber's appropriations subcommittees were rummaging through the budget estimates, legislative committees were digging into the details of a regular session's business, and Senator McCarthy and other investigators had their shows on the road. Eisenhower's appointees had barely found their desks before being called to testify on bills and appropriations, urged to hire assistants who had proved their value on the Hill, and pressed into policy positions long advocated by their experienced big brothers, the congressional Republicans.

First Impressions at the Departments

The Eisenhower appointees made a variety of approaches to their departments. A few moved in with words of appreciation for the preparations that had been made for their coming, expressed confidence in the employees, and set to work with a minimum of disturbance. Most of them, however, made statements or took actions that suggested their belief in the campaign talk of a mess in Washington and skepticism about the neutrality of the civil service.

One of the smoothest transfers of power was at the Budget Bureau. Joseph Dodge evidently had gained confidence in the staff during his pre-inaugural weeks of observation—or at least had come to the practical conclusion that he could not revise Truman's budget without the cooperation of the men who had put it together. At any rate, he hired his predecessor, Frederick Lawton, as a special consultant; asked the assistant director, Elmer Staats, to remain temporarily; and made no move to replace the career men who comprised the remainder of the top staff.

George Humphrey took command at the Treasury with quiet confidence following lengthy and cordial consultations with Secretary Snyder.[8] His principal subcabinet aides were men with substantial Washington experience and knowledge of Treasury operations. Two career assistant secretaries were retained, and only a few other changes were made in the top staff of the department. Humphrey's conduct impressed bureaucrats, congressmen, reporters, and his colleagues alike; most of the early reports on how the administration was doing rated him the star performer.

But in other departments the transfer was not so smooth. The day after he was sworn in, Secretary Benson announced a major reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, which he said was necessary because the department had "swollen into a huge bureaucracy." He followed that with a memorandum reminding the employees of their duty to give "a full day's work for a full day's pay."[9] Secretary Dulles, apparently determined to establish Republican party confidence in the State Department regardless of the administrative effects, made public statements stressing his determination to straighten out a bad situation, told the staff he would demand "positive loyalty," and began to shuffle the top Foreign Service Officer assignments.[10] Secretary Weeks in various ways made clear his belief that a department so recently headed by such men as Harry Hopkins and Henry Wallace must be crawling with rabid New Dealers, or worse. Secretary McKay, an affable gentleman himself, brought an assistant from the West Coast who was soon telling visitors to the Interior Department that the new administration had arrived just in time to prevent the socialization of the United States. Several of the new department heads issued staff memoranda announcing that such delinquencies as tardiness at the office, long lunch hours and coffee breaks, and smoking in the corridors would no longer be tolerated. ". . . The tone of these," commented Richard Rovere, "was such as to suggest that the new administration held the view that, prior to its blessed advent, no one in Washington had ever done an honest day's work."[11]

[8] The Humphrey-Snyder consultations led, among other things, to the joint appointment of a committee of businessmen and government officials to verify the cash and other valuables on the Treasury books. The committee reported a few weeks later that it had checked everything, including the gold bars at Fort Knox, and all was in order. Washington *Evening Star* (Mar. 18. 1953).

[9] *Washington Post* (Jan. 23, 1953).

[10] Department of State, "Statement by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles," Press Release 40, Jan. 21, 1953.

[11] Rovere, *op. cit.*

Such behavior was symptomatic of an attitude that was to have disruptive effects for the first several months of the new administration. The "hostile native complex," it was soon called—a compound of suspicion, fear, and contempt. Before seriously trying to get acquainted with the staffs they had inherited, many of the new appointees made public statements lamenting the limited opportunities the rules allowed them to bring in aides of their own choice. Instead of giving instructions or asking for advice on how to achieve policy objectives, they assumed in advance that their staffs would be uncooperative and probably would give them distorted facts and bad advice. The new appointees kept their own counsel and did not explain their purposes. Feeling unwanted and untrusted, the staffs volunteered less and less. Uninformed but unwilling to make decisions on the basis of staff recommendations, the Eisenhower men sat on the action papers, effectively tying up agency operations.

In such a climate, the steps ordered by Truman to provide continuity and information for the new administration had but limited success. A few of the "official holdovers" at the subcabinet level were well used, particularly in the military departments. But others, who had assumed that their function would be to spell out for the new leaders the subtle background of departmental problems and policies, soon began to feel like fifth wheels. Their new colleagues kept to themselves and sought advice, if at all, on strictly procedural matters. Despite whatever murmurs of thanks they may have made to their predecessors, many Republicans made little use of the briefing books and other policy memoranda that had been prepared for their use. Such material was considered unreliable, since it had been prepared by the Truman bureaucracy. Most of the new executives were feeling too harassed to absorb voluminous written material anyway. They sought advice in easier doses from Republican congressmen and their allies among the interest groups.

Ike's Outlook

Sitting atop all this was Dwight D. Eisenhower. How did he view the task before him? The historical material to permit a full and authoritative answer is not yet available, but Eisenhower seems to have thought of himself as essentially a reasonable, moderate, well-tempered man who had been called to restore order and harmony in a situation that had de-

generated into confusion, passion, and extremes. His approach was the same one that had worked at SHAEF and at NATO. He would run a tight administrative shop and settle both internal and external disputes about the broad objectives of the organization by exercising his proven talent for conciliation and compromise.

His views on many issues of substantive policy were tentative, but Eisenhower mainly thought of himself as a moderate conservative. In the domestic field he intended to move gradually toward historic Republican goals without giving way to the party's reactionary elements. In foreign affairs he had no thought of either wild adventures or meek withdrawal, intending a continuation of most existing lines of policy, to the extent that they could be adjusted to what seemed to be economic realities. He was well aware of the complexities of many issues and the wide differences among Republicans. For that reason he would consult experts, move cautiously, and make great effort to accommodate all views before committing his administration.

Eisenhower's approach to the leadership and management of the executive branch reflected his military experience, perhaps even more than he realized. He put great emphasis on getting properly staffed and organized before trying to act. It was evident early in the administration, although not specifically stated, that Sherman Adams was to be a chief of staff as nearly as it was possible to create one in the White House setting. Closely related was Eisenhower's desire for clear delineation of staff responsibilities and decision-making through study groups, position papers, and group discussion, with the result laid out in formal written directives. There was also perhaps something reminiscent of the military top commander in his detached attitude toward processes, problems, and people at lower levels of his organization. In contrast to Roosevelt's haphazard intervention into all sorts of detail and Truman's determination to learn everything, Eisenhower left the details to others and seemed determined not to get involved in matters that did not directly concern him.

In one important respect Eisenhower's viewpoint was insufficiently appreciated: he was considerably more sensitive to Congress than was generally realized. Republican congressmen had been his allies (or at least co-belligerents) in the recent fight against Stevenson and Truman. Notwithstanding latent differences of policy, he had lines of communication and a feeling of identification with the Republicans on the Hill that he did not yet have with the executive branch. The need for congress-

sional support of his program could easily be envisaged. There also was the special circumstance of his personal relationship with Taft.

These practical considerations, furthermore, were wrapped in a principle. Eisenhower had been giving voice with increasing frequency to the Whiggish doctrines of legislative-executive relations that had become articles of Republican faith during the years when the opposition to the Democrats had centered in Congress. He accepted the familiar claim that Roosevelt and Truman had disturbed a natural and proper balance between the President and Congress, and that their methods of leadership had been highly impolitic, if not unconstitutional. Congress was a co-equal branch of the government, and he intended to make it a partner, not an opponent.

This intention was expressed in various practical ways during Eisenhower's first days in the White House. He and his staff had long consultations with the legislative leaders. They were particularly deferential to Senator Taft, who still approached the White House warily as if it were an enemy camp.[12] In a series of luncheons that extended over several months, every senator and representative, Democrat as well as Republican, was entertained at the White House. In his earliest cabinet meetings, Eisenhower stressed to his department heads the importance of good relations with the Republican congressmen. At a moment when the bureaucracy was looking to the President to protect it from the rampages of McCarthy, the President was encouraging the department heads to take a sympathetic attitude toward congressional investigations of the executive branch.[13]

Aside from rudimentary constitutional doctrine, Eisenhower's preconceptions of presidential leadership were in terms of personal rather than institutional relationships. He declined to take seriously the idea of inherent and irrepressible conflict between the President and Congress, or even between political interests in general. Reasonable men could compromise and get along. He would meet anyone half way, speak ill of no man, and soothe what he considered the disgraceful personal and partisan antagonisms that had torn the political community during Truman's Presidency.

[12] William S. White, *The Taft Story* (1954), p. 218.

[13] These really were, he pointed out, investigations of Truman's administration. If the new administration cooperated with Congress and let the investigators know what steps were being taken to correct the situations they found, Congress would eventually gain confidence in the administration and allow it to do its own investigating. Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-86, 286.

CONFUSION AND ALARMS

These differences of approach among bureaucrats, congressmen, the new departmental administrators, and the President became manifest in the early weeks of the Eisenhower administration. The civil service was in an increasingly anxious state, departmental operations were slowing down, and the President and his associates appeared not to know their own minds on many matters that awaited decision. Responsible elements of the congressional leadership were restless, and other Republican legislators, who cared not a fig about the President's desire to make them partners, pushed ahead with enterprises of their own. These included everything from major policy proposals and projects to hamstring the entire executive branch, down to private vendettas against individual bureaucrats.

Reed and Bricker

One potentially troublesome situation was in the field of finance. By prior arrangement, the first bill introduced in the new Congress called for advancing the expiration date of the special Korean War income tax rates from December 31, 1953, to June 30, 1953. This would cost the Treasury about $3 billion. The sponsor of this measure, Daniel A. Reed of New York, the elderly chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, had lined up a good deal of support for his bill by inauguration day. Since the new administration had not consulted him, he had not consulted it. The country had been promised a tax cut, and he would give it one. Besides, he asserted, the writing of tax bills was a function of his committee, not the White House or the Treasury.[14] Prior to the State of the Union address, none of the administration leaders made direct statements on tax policy, and Reed ignored hints from the Budget Bureau and the Treasury that they might not be able to afford a tax cut. This bill would be stopped Reed said, "over my dead body."[15]

In another proposal touching the heart of presidential power, Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio introduced a constitutional amendment to redefine the treaty-making power and sharply limit the President's author-

[14] John D. Morris, "Eisenhower Details Awaited in Capitol," *New York Times* (Jan. 22, 1953); Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "President's Message Should Chart Course," *Washington Post* (Jan. 30, 1953).

[15] *New York Times* (Feb. 1, 1953).

ity to conclude executive agreements with foreign nations. This was the culmination of a long campaign in which support had been enlisted from conservative legal authorities, legislators of both parties concerned about the growth of executive power, and many conservative groups that still felt that FDR had sold out the nation's interests in defiance of the Constitution. So successful had this agitation been that 61 Senators, including many Democrats, were listed as co-sponsors of Bricker's proposal. During the Commodore period, Bricker had tried unsuccessfully to get an Eisenhower commitment to support the proposal. But Eisenhower had not flatly rejected it, and while the administration tried to get organized and determine its position on the matter, Bricker continued to push ahead and gain support.

Reorganization: Taft Recovers a Fumble

One matter on which congressmen caught the administration off balance concerned the President's power to reorganize the executive branch. The existing version of the administrative reorganization act, which had been in effect in one form or another most of the time since the Hoover administration, authorized the President to propose plans for the reorganization of any administrative agency; such plans went into effect in sixty days unless in the meantime either house of Congress passed by a constitutional majority (*i.e.,* a majority of its members) a resolution of disapproval. The Budget Bureau, which guarded the presidential interest in such matters, had pointed out even before inauguration that this law was scheduled to expire on March 31. At the Commodore, the Rockefeller-Fleming-Milton Eisenhower committee on reorganization had picked up the signal and advised Eisenhower of the importance of getting the authority extended. The subject had been mentioned to the Republican legislative leaders on one of their visits to the Commodore, and bills extending the act were introduced in both Houses before the new administration arrived in Washington.

However, Representative Clare Hoffman of Michigan, abetted by a few other congressmen devoted to trimming presidential authority, proposed an amendment providing that presidential plans could be killed by a simple majority—a majority of those present and voting—instead of a constitutional majority. On January 27, Budget Director Dodge, testifying before the House Government Operations Committee

on behalf of the administration, strongly urged that the bill be put through in its original form. The Hoffman amendment, or any other change diminishing the President's power to straighten out the government, ". . . would be not only an unexpected handicap but certainly to a degree a denial of one of the important factors in public opinion which brought this administration into office."[16] In the ensuing questioning the Republican members of the committee challenged Mr. Dodge, while the Democratic members indicated willingness to protect the President from his own party. The committee vote was a straight party-line split, with the Republican majority for and the Democratic minority against the Hoffman amendment. A Senate committee took similar action the same day on the companion bill.

The press, on the lookout for conflict between the administration and the Republican right wing, drew the public's attention to the significance of what the committees had done. "Squirrel-headed!" snorted Harry Truman out in Missouri. Seizing the opportunity to embarrass the Republicans, the Democrats organized a legislative fight to "give the President what he needs."[17]

However, the Republican legislators handling the matter continued to express confidence that what the committees had done would be acceptable to the President. No one could understand this, until Press Secretary Hagerty admitted that the day before Dodge had gone up to testify, the President had indicated in his regular conference with the legislative leaders that the bill with the Hoffman amendment would be all right.[18] Dodge obviously had not received any word of change in the administration's position, and the fact that there were several versions of what had been said in the legislative conference raised doubts that Eisenhower had really understood the significance of what he was approving. But the damage was done, and the administration was in no position to change its mind in public again.

At this point Senator Taft stepped in with a comment that since there was so much confusion on the subject, he thought it would be best to extend the existing act without amendments. Majority Leader Halleck picked up the cue.[19] A day or two later, Taft and Halleck, Sherman

[16] Washington *Sunday Star* (Feb. 1, 1953).

[17] *New York Times* (Jan. 29 and 30, 1953); *Washington Post* (Jan. 29 and 30, 1953).

[18] Washington *Evening Star* (Jan. 30, 1953).

[19] *Ibid.; Washington Post* (Jan. 31, 1953).

Adams, General Persons, Dodge, and Milton Eisenhower assembled for luncheon at the Metropolitan Club and straightened the matter out.[20] The following week both houses brought the bill to the floor, defeated the restrictive amendments by large majorities, and extended the President's power intact.

The matter perhaps did not merit the wide press attention it received, but it was indicative of the administration's relative insensitivity to questions of executive power that were meaningful to the Washington political community, as well as its dependence on the good offices of Senator Taft.

Council of Economic Advisers Through the Wringer

Shortly after the organization act episode, came another demonstration of congressional aggressiveness. It involved the Council of Economic Advisers, the three-headed body established in the Executive Office by the Employment Act of 1946. With the aid of a small staff of economists and statisticians, most of them professional civil servants of long tenure, the Council watched economic trends, advised the President, and prepared material for the President's annual economic reports. The Council had long been a target for attacks by conservative elements of Congress, particularly during the later Truman years after Leon H. Keyserling, a voluble supporter of Truman's policies and liberal economic doctrines, became its chairman. During the 1952 session of Congress, the House—under Democratic control—had voted a drastic slash in the Council's appropriation for the 1952-53 fiscal year. The Senate had come to the Council's defense but was unable to carry the day completely. The two houses had compromised on an appropriation only for the first nine months of the fiscal year, until March 31, 1953, on the ostensible ground that the new President, whoever he might be, could decide for himself about the Council's future. Many who had no quarrel with the Council on ideological grounds had doubts that a three-man committee was the best way to provide advice to the President.[21]

As the Eisenhower administration came on the scene, a request for $75,000 to finance the Council through the last quarter of the fiscal year lay before the House Appropriations Committee, along with other items

[20] *New York Times* (Feb. 3, 1953).

[21] Concise background on the controversial Council is in Corinne Silverman, *The President's Council of Economic Advisers*, Inter-university Case Program #48 (1959)

in a catch-all supplemental appropriation bill. Chairman Keyserling and one other Council member had resigned, and the third was in a hospital and effectively out of action. Eisenhower had not announced any appointments to the Council, and the staff was left to perform its routine activities with no politically responsible person in charge.

The House committee scheduled a hearing on the Council's supplemental appropriation for February 5. Confronted with this, staff members took the initiative in trying to ascertain the administration's intentions. After a day or two, they were told by Gabriel Hauge, Eisenhower's administrative assistant in the economic area, that the President wanted to continue the Council, at least to the end of the fiscal year. On February 4, Sherman Adams conveyed this message to the House and Senate committees.

At the hearing there were no Eisenhower appointees in evidence. The Council was represented by one of the staff economists and the administrative officer, a relatively junior civil servant who handled budget, personnel, and other housekeeping matters. They told the congressmen of their understanding that the President wanted the organization continued, and made a routine justification of the need for funds. Brushing this aside, the chairman of the subcommittee, Rep. John Phillips of California, indicated that he was interested only in discussing the liquidation of the agency. He delivered a stern lecture, warning the hapless administrative officer that he would be personally liable for any funds spent after March 31. Democratic congressmen did not come to the Council's defense. Shortly thereafter, with no visible protest from the White House and no floor discussion, the House approved the supplemental bill. It provided nothing for the Council but $25,000, a third of the amount requested, for an "economic adviser" to the President.[22] The purpose, said John Taber candidly, was "to get rid of that gang that is in there now" by cutting off money for salaries.[23]

[22] This information was obtained in part from civil servants who appeared before the committee. The printed hearing record does not show that the Council staff appeared before the subcommittee or that there was any discussion on the subject. (*Second Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1953,* Hearings before the House Committee on Appropriations, 83 Cong., 1 sess., 1953.) Thus there was no record to show that the White House had asked to have the Council continued. The House committee report on the supplemental appropriation bill contained no explanation of the committee's action, and the bill was approved on the floor with no questions asked. *Second Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1953.* H. Rep. 46, 83 Cong. 1 sess.; *Congressional Record,* Vol. 99, Pt. 1 (Feb. 19, 1953), pp. 1233-83.

[23] *Washington Post* (Feb. 18, 1953).

This play did not escape the notice of professional economists, liberal and labor groups, and those who spoke for the moderate Republicans. Appeals were made to the Senate and to the President to reverse the House action. However, playing it safe, the Council administrative officer gave the entire staff (including himself) thirty-day dismissal notices, so that they would be safely off the payroll at the end of March if new funds were not forthcoming.

Four days after the House acted, the appropriation bill came before the Senate committee. The following exchange occurred:

> Senator Flanders: Not being a lawyer familiar with procedures, I am not clear in my mind as to whether the House can in effect dismiss a body set up by statute. . . .
>
> Senator Ferguson: Do you think when a statute sets up a body that the next session of the legislature has to appropriate for that body?
>
> Senator Flanders: I am not a lawyer, Senator. . . .
>
> Senator Ferguson: You know the old saying there is more than one way to kill a cat.
>
> Senator Flanders: All right; thank you.
>
> Senator Ferguson: I think this is somewhat of a cat.[24]

However, Sherman Adams' letter saying that the President believed it "highly important" to continue the agency until permanent plans for it could be made, was put into the record. And a day or two later, Eisenhower himself wrote a letter to Senator Bridges, chairman of the appropriations committee, setting forth his belief in the principles of the Employment Act and his conviction that "the machinery established by this act is essentially sound."[25] Consequently, the committee recommended, and the Senate voted, an appropriation of $60,000 to the Council.

Shortly thereafter, Eisenhower found a chairman for the organization. In response to his instruction to find "the best man in the country" on the ups and downs of business, his aides came up with Arthur F. Burns, director of research at the National Bureau of Economic Research.[26]

[24] *Second Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1953.* Hearings before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, 83 Cong. 1 sess. (1953), p. 50.

[25] *Washington Post* (Feb. 28, 1953).

[26] "Economic Advisers—New Style," *Business Week* (Feb. 21, 1953), p. 31; "Eisenhower Decides CEA's Size and Chairman," *Business Week* (Mar. 7, 1953), p. 28; *New York Times* (Mar. 7, 1953).

Burns was nominated and appeared before a Senate committee on March 11. When reminded by Senator John Sparkman that his entire prospective staff had been given notice, Burns commented that the situation was "a sad one." He said: ". . . I have talked to every professional person on the staff. I haven't reached any final decision. But my whole feeling is that a fairly large proportion of those individuals are good scholars and should be retained, if possible."[27]

A few days later the conference committee took up the Council issue. The House members continued to insist that the Council must die. Finally, Taber and Bridges consulted Sherman Adams and obtained his approval of a compromise. The agreement, which was approved by both houses, was to accept the House version and appropriate no money for the Council, thus effectively dismissing its entire staff. A sum of $50,000 was voted to the President for an economic adviser and staff—exempt from civil service. Burns, who meanwhile had been confirmed, took the oath and spent the few remaining days of March liquidating the organization. He went on the White House payroll as economic adviser to the President, selecting a half-dozen members of the Council staff to go with him. The remainder—over twenty persons—were let go.

By acquiescing in the liquidation of the old staff, the administration was enabled to preserve the concept of the Council itself. Funds to reestablish the Council were included in the independent offices appropriation act for fiscal 1954. After July 1, the other two places on the Council were filled by Eisenhower appointees, and the organization was put back in business with an almost entirely new staff.

It was not altogether surprising that an organization so involved in presidential policy, particularly one recently headed by such a controversial person as Leon Keyserling, should be hard hit by the transition. However, the wrecking of the Council organization was in sharp contrast to the smooth transfer of power at its sister organization, the Budget Bureau. The extent to which the administration made behind-the-scenes endeavors to protect the Council remains unknown, but it appeared to make only token resistance to an essentially irresponsible legislative invasion of the Executive Office of the President. The fate of this group of civil servants who had inadvertently become associated with a politically unpopular figure was far from reassuring to the bureaucracy.

[27] *Nomination of Arthur F. Burns,* Hearings before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, 83 Cong. 1 sess. (1953), p. 9.

A MISSPENT HONEYMOON

The administration's behavior on arriving in Washington was a sharp let-down after the apparent momentum that had been built up at the Commodore. Eisenhower held no press conferences and made no announcements of any consequence. Other members of the administration made conflicting statements. Such things as Wilson's inept conduct before the Senate committee and the evident contempt in which many of the new cabinet members held all those politicians and civil servants who had worked in the government before their arrival revealed an insensitivity to the environment and a lack of urbanity that was disappointing to most of the Washington political community. The apparent indifference of the White House to the activities of Reed, Taber, Bricker, and others brought warnings that Eisenhower must assert himself before the congressional right wing got completely out of control.[28]

For a while, the principal bottleneck appeared to be the State of the Union address. In an effort to achieve broad consensus, all the important sections were thoroughly discussed and cleared with the appropriate people inside the administration and with key figures on Capitol Hill—a task that involved lengthy haggling. Until the administration line was laid down, departmental officials were reluctant to make decisions of any consequence. But on February 2, after much caucusing and hard labor, the document was ready, and Eisenhower made his maiden appearance before Congress.[29] It was, in fact, a *tour de force.* In standard State of the Union address fashion, the President covered both the foreign and domestic fields and gave at least brief mention to practically every important governmental program and issue. For the most part, he made general statements that established his position more clearly than before but still did not bind him on specifics. However, there were enough dramatic announcements that it seemed to mark the end of the administration's indecision.

[28] *E.g.,* Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "President's Message Should Chart Course," *Washington Post* (Jan. 30, 1953); *Cf. New York Times* (Feb. 1, 1953).

[29] This was the first appearance of a Republican President before Congress since Coolidge. Hoover had sent all his messages in writing. *Ibid.* (Feb. 3, 1953).

Eisenhower on the State of the Union

The most striking announcements were in the field of foreign policy. Eisenhower struck what were intended as psychological blows at Communist China. First, he proposed to assist in a major build-up of the Republic of Korea forces. Then he pointed out that since 1950 the United States Navy had been interposed between Formosa and the Chinese mainland, "in effect . . . required to serve as a defensive arm of Communist China," He was, therefore, issuing orders "that the Seventh Fleet no longer be employed to shield Communist China." Another highlight of the address was Eisenhower's indirect reference to Roosevelt's Yalta agreements, which many Republicans had long considered a shameful betrayal of Poland, China, and other nations. He said: "I shall ask Congress . . . to join in an appropriate resolution making clear that this Government recognizes no kind of commitment contained in secret understandings of the past with foreign governments which permit this kind of enslavement."

Eisenhower pledged his administration to "genuine, continuous cooperation" with Congress and, despite his jabs at the policies of previous administrations, to a "spirit of true bipartisanship" in foreign policy. The "new, positive foreign policy" would be consistent and global, using "all peaceful methods and devices" to secure freedom. Recognizing the interdependence of free peoples, he proposed to give assistance to other free nations "in the measure that they strive earnestly to do their full share of the common task." He encouraged economic and political unity in Europe and advocated measures to increase international trade, including a streamlining of United States customs procedures and renewal of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act.

The outstanding announcement in the domestic field was that since direct economic controls were undesirable in principle and ineffective in practice, he would not ask that authority for price and wage controls be extended past its scheduled expiration in April. In the meantime, he said, steps would be taken to lift controls in an orderly manner. Restrictions on most materials also would be removed gradually, although it would be necessary to have legislation extending authority for certain controls of this type past the expiration date of June 30.

Eisenhower discussed the problem of balancing military and economic strength and spoke of the need for efficiency and better coordination

of the armed services. The new Secretary of Defense would "recommend such changes . . . as may be necessary to clarify responsibilities and improve the total effectiveness of our defense effort." Eisenhower promised to see that the NSC had "the vitality to perform effectively its statutory role," and to review and strengthen both the international information and civil defense programs.

The President reiterated his desire to reduce expenditures, balance the budget, check inflation, reduce taxes, and "encourage the initiative of our citizens." The lack of flexibility in the budgetary situation did not make these easy goals to achieve, he asserted, and it would not be wise to cut taxes until the budget was under control. There would be efforts to get more of the public debt funded in long-term issues. Past differences between the Treasury and the Federal Reserve were mentioned; from now on the single purpose of these agencies would be to stabilize the economy and "encourage the free play of our people's genius for individual initiative."

One by one, the President reviewed the other functional areas of government, in most cases announcing studies and reviews of policy to identify feasible changes and retrenchments of federal activity. Development of natural resources should not be by "exclusive dependence on Federal bureaucracy," but from "a partnership of the States and local communities, private citizens and the Federal Government, all working together." Agricultural policy was being studied with a goal of achieving "full parity of income . . . in ways that minimize governmental interference in the farmers' affairs." He decried "slanted partisan appeals to American workers, spoken as if they were a group apart." He would do away with "governmental paternalism in labor relations," encourage free collective bargaining, and study possible amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act. Social security would be improved and extended, and the division of federal and state responsibility in the welfare field would be restudied. He pledged to safeguard all civil rights and urged the ending of racial discrimination.

In the administrative field, Eisenhower asserted the principle of executive responsibility for personnel security, promised measures to increase efficiency, and asked for renewal of the reorganization act.

The peroration was a call for balance and moderation, an America strong and productive but concerned with spiritual values, following in world affairs a course "between an assertion of strength that is truculent

and a confession of helplessness that is cowardly," and in domestic affairs seeking "a middle way between untrammeled freedom of the individual and the demands for the welfare of the whole Nation."[30]

Interrupted over fifty times for applause, the address was judged a fine beginning, just what had been expected of Eisenhower. He had driven straight down the political center. The most venturesome parts of the speech were the references to the Yalta agreements and the Seventh Fleet; most Democrats regarded these as unfair digs at Roosevelt and Truman. Otherwise, there was little to which the opposition could take serious exception in view of the mandate implied by Eisenhower's electoral victory. Civil servants hoped the assertion of executive responsibility for the internal conduct of the executive branch meant the beginning of the end of legislative harassment. The public and editorial response was excellent. Some considered it Eisenhower's best speech since entering politics, marking his "reemergence . . . as a man of decision and purpose."[31] The crusade seemed to be rolling once more.

Waiting for the Program

The State of the Union address was on a Monday. For the remainder of that week, the administration made news with announcements of a budget-cutting drive, lifting economic controls, and several important administrative and diplomatic appointments. These events, although important, were mostly internal to the executive branch and contributed little to keeping Congress busy. Now, if ever, Congress was in a honeymoon mood. But what, specifically, did the President want, and in what sequence? Where were the administration's draft bills?

After the next week's meeting of the legislative leaders with the President (these were a regular Monday event), Senator Taft and Speaker Martin issued a joint statement saying that they had agreed with the President on an eleven-point domestic legislative program. The fact that the program was announced by the legislators rather than the President suggested Eisenhower's continued deference to Congress. Furthermore, the program on close inspection appeared remarkably thin. The first item on the list was extending the reorganization act,

[30] *Congressional Record*, Vol. 99, Pt. 1 (Feb. 2, 1953), pp. 748-53.
[31] Rovere, *op. cit.*

which Congress already had done. The second was passing the regular appropriation bills, but Congress could not take definite action before receiving the administration's budget revisions, which would not be for several weeks. Other important subjects were amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act, limited extension of production and materials controls, extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, and broadening of social security coverage; on none of these, however, was the administration ready with specific recommendations. Redefinition of federal and state jurisdiction in the so-called tidelands was politically appealing but hardly urgent. Customs procedure simplification and the extension of school aid to defense-affected areas were important but not exciting business. Completing the list were Hawaiian statehood and a proposal to enlarge the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners from three to five members. There might be other items later, Taft said; in fact, he knew that the President had some foreign affairs proposals that he would announce himself. A tax cut was not ruled out but could not be undertaken before the budgetary situation was clarified.[32]

In the next few days Congress opened hearings on a tidelands bill. An early witness was Attorney General Brownell, who said that the administration did not consider valid Truman's last-minute executive order making the tidelands a Navy petroleum reserve. A proposal to give the Federal Security Agency new status as a Department of Health, Education and Welfare was cleared with the congressional leaders,[33] and legislative-executive discussions were begun on details of other items on the eleven-point program. But still no definite proposals reached the Hill.

Early the following week, on February 17, Eisenhower recaptured the headlines with his first presidential press conference. He had not met the press since his return from Korea, and there had been rumors

[32] *New York Times* (Feb. 10, 1953).

[33] Truman's repeated requests for this action had been blocked mainly by legislative antagonism to his FSA administrator, Oscar Ewing. The legislators now appeared anxious to oblige Oveta Culp Hobby. However, in deference to Taft's objections, the administration abandoned its plan to call it the Department of General Welfare and substituted the clumsy Department of Health, Education and Welfare—a title which was not quite so suggestive of "welfare state" and also appeased the powerful medical and education lobbies. (White, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-23.) Senator Taft and Republican congressman Walter H. Judd of Minnesota told an American Medical Association meeting a few weeks later that one of the main purposes of the reorganization was to make it easier to clean out the former policy makers of the FSA who were entrenched in the civil service. *New York Times* (Mar. 15, 1953), *Washington Post* (Mar. 15, 1953).

that he might not hold press conferences, or might change the format to exclude spontaneous questions and answers. Thus he considered it necessary to begin by denying that he had any antagonism to the press and reaffirming his belief in the value of such meetings. However, he announced that the conference would end at a certain time, and then occupied over half the period with statements on such subjects as farm prices, economic controls, and a balanced budget. In his volunteered responses to questions, he established what was soon to become a familiar pattern of earnest but roundabout, restrained comment that neither provoked controversy nor established a firm administration policy line. Reporters were mildly disappointed at the limited time for questions and Eisenhower's unexciting answers, but there was no salient reason for objecting, and the conference was generally considered a satisfactory performance.[34]

But after mid-February the loss of momentum and deterioration of the legislative situation became fully apparent. The administration was busy firing and hiring, retrenching and reorganizing, studying and surveying—all important activities that gave evidence of Eisenhower's passion for orderly procedure but did not add up to firm policy leadership. A few relatively minor proposals and administration positions on legislative matters were cleared to the Hill, but only after a great deal of effort. Congress sat on several major issues waiting for the administration to decide what it wanted. Failing to receive the usual grist of departmental proposals, the legislative committees pushed their own projects. Despite the pre-inaugural spadework done in the Budget Bureau and elsewhere, Eisenhower and his aides had not grasped either the concept or the administrative machinery of the presidential legislative program.[35] Meanwhile Senator McCarthy made headlines with his investigations and began to close in on Eisenhower appointees. By mid-March, the administration was on the defensive.

[34] See report and typical editorial comment in *New York Times* (Feb. 18, 1953). The transcript of the conference was released in paraphrase style, as had been Truman's custom. The verbatim transcript and introduction of television cameras came later in the first term.

[35] Richard E. Neustadt, "Presidency and Legislation: Planning the President's Program," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 49 (December 1955), pp. 980-1021.

CHAPTER 35

EISENHOWER ECONOMICS

Part of the apparent distraction of the Eisenhower administration in the first several days after inauguration was a result of the fact that several prominent members were giving a great deal of time to a matter that could not be disclosed prematurely. This was the project to lift price, wage, and other economic controls, as tentatively agreed at the Commodore. Early in February the spadework was done, and Eisenhower made his first major domestic policy decision. In the ensuing weeks, most of the economic control structure that had been built up for the Korean mobilization effort was rapidly dismantled—an operation that gladdened the hearts of business-minded Republicans and turned out to be an economic success as well.

LIBERATING THE ECONOMY

A key figure in the decontrol program was Arthur S. Flemming, one of the few holdovers from the Truman regime to achieve high place in the Eisenhower administration. A former public administration professor, minority (Republican) member of the Civil Service Commission, and active member of the first Hoover Commission, Flemming had been dividing his time between a university presidency and the Office of Defense Mobilization, where he was assistant director for man power. His combination of federal administrative *expertise* and Republican standing had led to his choice for Eisenhower's advisory

committee on reorganization formed at the Commodore. This in turn had made him the logical man for the Truman administration to leave behind as acting director of ODM. After inauguration Flemming, Gabriel Hauge, and consultant James F. Brownlee, a New York businessman with experience in both World War II and the Korean mobilization programs, were put to work on the problem of decontrolling the economy and reorganizing the civilian mobilization machinery. Such cabinet members as Humphrey, Weeks, and Wilson urged them onward and were influential with the President at key moments of decision.

Flemming and his associates found that most of the top officials in the control program felt that controls were still necessary to prevent serious inflation and diversion of critical materials into nonessential production. This view, which had been the official policy of the Truman administration, was largely supported by organized labor and the interest groups identified as "liberal," by many Democratic congressmen, and some professional economists. By contrast, the spokesmen of business were almost unanimous in urging the end of controls, and a considerable number of economists now thought that the economy had caught up to the Korean mobilization demands and could meet both civilian and defense requirements without direct governmental intervention. By the time of the State of the Union message, Eisenhower was ready to announce that he would not ask for extension of price and wage control authority past its expiration date of April 30. "In the meantime," he said, "steps will be taken to eliminate controls in an orderly manner and to terminate special agencies no longer needed for this purpose."

Several days later the administration moved with greater boldness than had been suggested by Eisenhower's announcement. The study group was ready with a plan for decontrol in several stages, which would give opportunities to check the economy's response to each stage before taking the next step. After thorough discussion within the administration, the plan was brought before the cabinet on February 6. The advocates of decontrol were still strongly in favor of going ahead rapidly, and Eisenhower decided to do so, although he was fully conscious that the decision involved some risk. "I hope, George, that you know what you're doing," he is reported to have told Humphrey.[1] The

[1] Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," *Fortune* (February 1956), p. 113.

end of controls on wages and salaries, meat, clothing, and most other consumer goods was announced later that day.

As there were no immediate economic repercussions, the administration moved quickly through six successive stages of decontrol, removing the last price ceiling on March 17. Democratic congressmen got on record with warnings that this hasty action might have unfortunate consequences. However, despite gloomy predictions, the economy seemed to absorb the shock of decontrol without serious difficulty.[2] Republicans pointed with pride to this quick redemption of a major campaign pledge.

For the next several weeks the administration debated internally and sparred with Congress on the question of what, if any, control legislation should be continued past April 30. Some experts and a few legislators—including conservative Republican Senator Homer Capehart of Indiana—were glad to see effective controls ended but thought it would be desirable to give the President authority to re-impose wage and price ceilings in an emergency. Eisenhower, although not openly opposing a stand-by control law, did not seek it. He did, however, favor having authority over installment buying and other forms of credit; such controls he regarded as "indirect" and less offensive in a free economy. But Taft and other influential Republican legislators were opposed even to this much control. Eventually Congress passed a bill providing only for control of rents in defense areas and the use of certain scarce materials.[3]

Ending the controls was a shorter job than clearing away the administrative wreckage. Through a series of executive orders in February and March, the remnants of the principal control agencies—the Wage Stabilization Board, the Office of Price Stabilization, the Economic

[2] Some prices went up, but other prices went down, so that by September the Bureau of Labor Statistics wholesale price index had risen .8 per cent and the consumer price index 1.1 per cent, both considered modest increases. (U. S. Director of Defense Mobilization, *Defense Mobilization.* A report to the President, 1953, p. 23.) The principal exception was copper, which took a sharp jump in price and caused the administration some worry but remained within a range regarded as tolerable. On Eisenhower's decontrol program generally see Murphy in *Fortune* (February 1956), pp. 112-13, and Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (1956), pp. 32-34.

[3] The stand-by control controversy can be traced in the *New York Times* (Feb. 3, 10, 11, 12, 18, Mar. 26, May 20, June 4, and July 1, 1953). See also Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Robert Bendiner, "The Apostasy of Homer Capehart," *The Reporter* (May 12, 1953), p. 8.

Stabilization Agency, and the Defense Production Agency—were telescoped back into ODM, from which most of them had originally sprung. Then on April 2 the President announced a reorganization plan to abolish the long languishing National Security Resources Board and transfer its residual functions to ODM, which would be a permanent mobilization planning agency in the Executive Office of the President.[4] Flemming continued to head the consolidated agency on an acting basis for several weeks, during which it was reported that Eisenhower was looking for a suitable businessman for the post, and Flemming was said to be eager to return to his university. But none of this materialized, and Flemming eventually became the regular director.

TOWARD A BALANCED BUDGET

Simultaneous with the decontrol program, the new administration undertook a second top-priority job—cutting the federal budget. This was crucial to many Republican objectives, being a step toward tax reduction, price stability, and curbing big government. During the campaign Eisenhower had expressed his intention to reduce federal expenditures, then running over $74 billion annually, to about $60 billion in the course of a four-year term.[5] For a time after election, there was talk of getting about half way to that goal and balancing the budget in the first year, but Joseph Dodge's pre-inaugural investigations had dashed such hopes. In his State of the Union address Eisenhower declared: "The first order of business is the elimination of the annual deficit." He did not say when this could be accomplished, warning that it would not be easy because of obligations inherited from the previous administration, but he pledged the utmost effort on the part of the new executive leaders.

[4] This was "Reorganization Plan 3 of 1953." *New York Times* (Apr. 3, 1953). The enemies of the NSRB in the previous Congress had given it the same treatment as the Council of Economic Advisers, and its appropriation ran out on April 30. In this case the administration made no attempt to get a supplemental but simply transferred the pieces to ODM.

[5] At the time this must have seemed a fairly conservative promise, assuming that the Korean War could be ended. Annual expenditures before Korea had been just under $40 billion.

The federal budget had come a long way since General Dawes. Each budget was now the culmination of a year and a half of estimating, arguing, and reviewing at successively higher levels in the federal hierarchy. The annual document was 1,700 pages long, with each table and schedule implying decisions about issues and programs the complexity of which most of the incoming Republicans were only dimly aware of. The rate of spending had increased fifteen-fold since the last Republican President. Where to cut, and how much? Failure to cut would be either an admission that much of the Republican campaign had been on a spurious issue, or a sign of the new administration's inability to cope with the bureaucracy. Cutting too much, or in the wrong places, might endanger the national security and would certainly invite political protest and administrative chaos. Fortunately for the Republicans, the growth in budgetary complexity had been paralleled by the growth of a corps of civil service budget experts—men who not only knew the technical processes of budgeting and the problems of the programs being budgeted but also were steeped in a tradition of service to the administration of the day.

Cutting the Truman Budget

Joseph Dodge, somewhat to the surprise of his fellow Republicans, had chosen to enter the Budget Bureau alone. By inauguration day he had confirmed his initial hunch that it would be manageable. Working with the staff he inherited, and with his predecessor as a consultant, he laid plans for a revision of the budgetary figures submitted by Truman. On February 3, the day after Eisenhower's address to Congress, Dodge addressed a presidentially approved circular to all departments and agencies. "It is clear," he said, "that this situation will not be brought under control without action to reduce budgetary obligational authority, reduce the level of expenditures, critically examine existing programs, restrain commitments for new programs, and generally to drive for greater efficiency and reduced costs." All agencies were ordered to undertake immediate reviews of the Truman budget for fiscal 1954 and report proposed reductions to the Budget Bureau by March 2. Policy guides were included: Agencies were to restrict new hiring and plan for progressive reduction of personnel in the remainder of fiscal 1953 and all of 1954. Construction plans were to be re-examined by the

strictest standards of economy, going projects to be stopped where feasible, and projects in the planning stage to proceed only when "deemed clearly essential in terms of the objectives of this administration." All programs were to be studied immediately and action taken to eliminate unnecessary activities and hold others at minimum levels. Agencies were to indicate where substantial cuts might be made in future years and any legislation necessary to achieve that purpose.[6]

The Eisenhower appointees in the departments were sympathetic enough to the order's purpose; this was what most of them had come to Washington to do. Nevertheless, it put them under great pressure. Still getting acquainted with their departments, and with many top positions standing vacant, they were not yet in position to make responsible decisions about what activities to cut, and how much.

Meanwhile the budget cycle continued to run on Capitol Hill. The House Appropriations Committee was unable, or unwilling, to await the results of the budget review; subcommittee hearings proceeded on the basis of the Truman estimates. Those who had to testify on the detailed estimates were embarrassed by being unable either to defend or to disavow them. With the aid of Representative John Taber's "minute men" consultants, the subcommittees developed and urged on the administration their own ideas about what to cut.

Inside the agencies the budget review added to the already existing crisis of confidence between the new appointees and their staffs. All programs and plans came under scrutiny; nothing could be taken for granted. All but routine operations were usually stopped, and no new commitments were made. Rumors flew and tensions mounted.

It was a painful but in many respects an educational process for both sides. Holdover officials were forced to justify their activities to skeptical newcomers, stretch their thinking, establish firmer priorities, and devise ways to keep essential activities going at less cost. The new appointees got rapid and sometimes eye-opening educations in the business of their departments, finding in most cases that profligacy was not as widespread as they had thought. Important savings could not be accomplished by marginal trimmings, but required real sacrifices of programs and services—and people. Some department heads and their bureaus negotiated satisfactory reductions in reasonable harmony, al-

[6] Budget Bureau letter to all departments and agencies Feb. 3, 1953. *New York Times* (Feb. 4, 1953).

though it usually took several rounds of cuts to get the figures down far enough. In other cases it was less pleasant. Department heads increased their leverage and by-passed or neutralized bureau and division heads in whom they lacked confidence by establishing special "task forces" or calling in outside consultants. Disagreement on the feasibility of cuts caused or hastened the departure of bureau officials in a few instances.

But the job got done. All but the defense and foreign assistance revisions were turned in to the Budget Bureau by early March, and these came a few weeks later after consideration by the National Security Council. It is difficult to evaluate or generalize about the cuts; in some agencies they were assessed with considerable discrimination, and elsewhere there was obvious arbitrariness. The budgetary system offered no automatic means of establishing the relative priority of programs. It did, however, offer a framework within which the claims of competing activities could be laid side by side for informed and responsible political decision. In this respect, the Eisenhower appointees found the department-wide viewpoint of the budget officials a useful counterbalance to the pressures from program officials.

There had been early speculation that Eisenhower might submit an entirely new budget, but a more flexible procedure was used. Truman's budget was allowed to stand as the basic document. After the departments made their proposed revisions, they were studied at the Budget Bureau and discussed—and usually further reduced—in negotiations between Dodge and the department heads. The departmental revisions then were cleared with the President and transmitted to Congress one by one, as they were ready. The portions of the budget not revised stood as previously submitted. The new figures for the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, the first ones ready, were released in the last week of March, and others followed at short intervals. As the figures were released, the agency heads appeared before the appropriations subcommittees to explain the revisions. The defense and mutual security budgets, the last ones through, went to Congress in the first week of May, leaving two months to act before the beginning of the fiscal year.

When it was all added up, it appeared that Eisenhower had reduced Truman's request for new appropriations by $8.5 billion. Of this sum, over $5 billion had come out of the defense budget, mostly by "stretch-

ing out" the Truman administration's program for building up the Air Force. Despite the sizable cut in new money requested, however, estimated cash expenditures for fiscal 1954 were reduced by only $4.5 billion. Instead of a balanced budget, Eisenhower could only propose to reduce the planned deficit from $9.9 to $5.6 billion. He promised to make further reductions during the year if possible.[7]

Congressional Response

The next step was to get the revised estimates through Congress. Republican legislators had expressed concern, as the various departmental revisions were announced, that the cuts were not deep enough. On April 30 the legislative leaders met with the President and the cabinet to go over the whole budgetary situation, including the tentative military and mutual security revisions. All the previous hints about how hard it was going to be to balance the budget apparently had been lost on Senator Taft, because when the situation became clear to him he shouted: "It's a repudiation of everything we promised in the campaign." The intervention of others with small talk gave Eisenhower time to get control of his temper before replying. Finally, he responded by reminding Taft of the short-run inflexibility of the budget because of obligations established by law, and of the necessity of large defense and foreign aid expenditures. The administration, he said, had done the best it could to cut costs without endangering security and welfare.[8]

After the meeting, apparently fearing that Taft might talk to the press as he had over the Durkin appointment, Eisenhower issued a long public statement designed to blunt possible criticism from the arch-economizers. He asserted that important changes in defense concepts were being made to bring defense requirements and economic capabilities into a more effective permanent relationship. But these changes, significant as they were, could not become visible overnight.[9]

Taft never really became reconciled to the size of the budget, but he refrained from all-out attack. The mutual confidence between Eisenhower and Taft was by now strong enough to withstand the strain of the incident, and Taft was at that moment being gratified by other changes in the military establishment. Also, Taft was now beginning

[7] *Ibid.* (May 20, 1953).
[8] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-09.
[9] White House Press Release, Apr. 30, 1953.

to feel the effect of the illness that was to take his life in three months; he did not participate in the later stages of legislative debate on the military budget.

During May and June the appropriations committees whittled away at the revised figures. Most of the departmental estimates went through Congress substantially as Eisenhower had revised them, although in a few instances the committees cut deeper than the administration had recommended. There also were a few cases where the administration had to retreat because irate Republican congressmen found economy affecting their favorite projects. The main political trouble, however, concerned the two largest items, the military and mutual security budgets.

Disclosure that the Air Force had been cut by $5 billion brought the first sustained Democratic attack on the administration. Even some Republican senators, particularly Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, expressed concern when it was indicated that the goal of 143 Air Force wings had been reduced to 120. The debate came to a dramatic climax when the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, openly opposed the reductions. The story he told the congressional committees made it appear that Secretary Wilson had handled his relationships with the military chiefs in a strange manner. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had been told the total defense budget figure only one day before the critical meeting of the National Security Council at which they might theoretically have protested to the President, and it was not until a week later, at the last minute before the budget went to Congress, that the division of the sum among the services had been disclosed to the chiefs. Thus the administration's claim that the figure had been acceptable to the military leaders was true in a limited sense, if at all.[10]

Despite Vandenberg's appeal, however, Wilson was able to show that the Air Force was in administrative trouble over plane delivery schedules and that the appropriation cuts probably would not affect actual Air Force strength during the coming year. The President stood by Wilson, and the cuts went through substantially as requested. At the ceremonies held in honor of Vandenberg's retirement a few weeks later, Wilson and other top Defense officials were conspicuously missing.[11]

Eisenhower's legislative success on the defense budget was not duplicated for the mutual security program providing for military and

[10] John G. Norris, "Vandenberg's Hour," *Washington Post* (June 8, 1953).
[11] *Ibid.* (June 30, 1953).

economic assistance to foreign nations. Here the roles were reversed, with the President trying to stave off heavy cuts. The Truman budget had indicated $7.6 billion for mutual security. Eisenhower was sure this could be reduced, but, still fresh from his NATO experience and strongly believing in collective security, he feared cutting too much. He asked first for an authorization of $5.8 billion, and later amended it to $5.5 billion.[12] Steered by the sympathetic leaders of the two committees on foreign affairs, the authorization act called for $5.2 billion, which would have been reasonably satisfactory to the administration.

However, the bitter opponents of foreign aid had been saving their fire for the appropriation bill, which would be handled by more economy-minded committees. On July 7, in their regular conference with the President, the Republican legislative leaders warned of trouble ahead. Eisenhower made a strong plea for the program as requested, saying among other things that the maintenance of a strong mutual security program was essential if there were to be any further cuts in United States direct military expenditures.[13] Nevertheless, the prospects were not good, and on July 15 Eisenhower entertained John Taber and his House Appropriations Committee at breakfast, and Styles Bridges and the Senate Appropriations Committee at lunch, in order to tell his story directly to the legislators immediately concerned. He got pleasant hearings but no commitments. The next day a subcommittee of Taber's group voted to cut the administration's request to a flat $4 billion. On the 18th, the full committee voted to report $4.4 billion.

At that point a majority of the White House staff was of the opinion that Eisenhower should accept the committee recommendation without much protest. The President, however, felt that the situation was too serious for that. At a press conference on July 22, after suggesting that his own experience gave him some standing to judge such matters, he said flatly but politely that the cut was too heavy. Pro-aid forces immediately reported this on the floor of the House and renewed their pleas for support for the President. But it did no good. The House voted later that day, by a margin of 289 to 115, to accept the com-

[12] Because the mutual security program was authorized on an annual basis, it was necessary first to pass a general statute authorizing the program and a certain level of expenditure, then an actual appropriation of funds.

[13] Eisenhower told the leaders that it would take an increase of seven or eight billion dollars in direct defense expenditures to make up for one or two billion cut from mutual security. Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

mittee's recommendation of $4.4 billion. The Senate later raised it only to $4.5 billion, which the House accepted. It did not escape notice that on this, as on several previous foreign affairs issues, the President had received stronger support from the Democrats than from the Republicans.

One compensation in all this was that it improved the budgetary outlook. Truman's request for $72.9 billion in new obligational authority, cut by Eisenhower to $64.2 billion, had been trimmed by Congress to $63.2 billion. Estimated expenditures for fiscal 1954 had been reduced from $78.6 to $72.1 billion. While these cuts represented a significant step toward a balanced budget, they still left a prospect of a deficit of several billion dollars and did not admit of the immediate tax reductions for which many Republicans had hoped.

DEBT AND TAXES

For the taxation side of the fiscal story, it is necessary to go back several months and pay closer attention to the activities of the energetic, persuasive Secretary of the Treasury, who had been gaining rapidly in stature both with the public and inside the administration. George Humphrey had surrounded himself at the outset with associates who were outstanding among the Eisenhower appointees for their governmental experience and sophistication. Within a few weeks the new group had taken effective command of the complicated Treasury machinery and made a change of policy that had significant effects on the nation's economy.

Tightening the Money Market

Humphrey and Randolph Burgess, the former New York banker who was his principal adviser on fiscal and monetary policy, felt that one of the main obstacles to the sound dollar that Eisenhower had promised was the prevailing low level of interest rates in the country's money markets. "Easy money" led to inflation. Since the beginning of World War II, the Federal Reserve system had helped maintain low interest rates on government issues by open-market purchases and other means. Since a famous Treasury-Federal Reserve "accord" of 1951 the "Fed" was no longer "pegging" the bond market, but as the Eisenhower

administration came in, the rates were still low—2½ per cent on long-term bonds and much less on short-term Treasury issues.

Another matter that worried Humphrey, as it had worried his predecessors, was the fact that in the previous few years more and more of the Treasury's financing had been done on a short-term basis. With a national debt of $260-odd billion, the Treasury had to go into the money market with over $100 billion in new issues each year just to keep the debt afloat. This was an enormous administrative burden, and the Treasury men claimed to be in a constant "state of jitters" for fear the next issue would somehow fail. Many financial men thought that the frequent appearance of new government issues kept the money market unsettled and had in itself certain inflationary effects. Eisenhower had mentioned the short-term debt problem in his State of the Union message, and it was freely predicted that the administration would take early action to "stretch out" the maturities and perhaps tighten the money supply.[14]

Humphrey did indeed make such a proposal, which was discussed in the cabinet and received general support.[15] In mid-April the Treasury took the financial world by surprise by announcing an offering of $2 billion worth of 30-year bonds, to bear interest at 3¼ per cent. This was the highest interest rate on governments since the early 1930's, and the first issue of 30-year bonds since World War II.

The offering at first seemed a great success. Initial subscriptions were five times the amount of the issue, and in the money markets the bonds were bid up to a point over par. Humphrey called it a significant step toward getting the debt on a longer-term basis. He pointed out that since much of the issue would be held by savings banks, insurance companies, and other institutional investors, it would "benefit the millions of families who have been most damaged by inflation and by inadequate return on savings because of artificially low interest rates."[16] Immediately there were signs of a tightening money market, as the financial community interpreted the Treasury's action as the beginning of a major new policy trend. Humphrey was the man of the hour.

It soon appeared, however, that Humphrey had started more than he had bargained for. By the first of May, money had tightened signifi-

[14] See *Business Week* (Mar. 28, 1953), p. 98.

[15] Eisenhower, according to one report, followed the discussions and endorsed Humphrey's general objectives but was content to leave the technical aspects of the subject to the experts. Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[16] Quoted in *Business Week* (Apr. 25, 1953), p. 143.

cantly; commercial interest rates were up and corporations were reported to be reconsidering expansion plans. But Humphrey's 3¼'s, instead of leading the money market, were now chasing it. The new bonds were selling below par, and less attractive governments were at record lows. This trend continued for several weeks. Interest rates went up everywhere, the money market was in near crisis, and Humphrey came under severe political attack for his deflationary policies.

By the end of May the Treasury was in retreat. Its next major issue, part of which was in replacement of a group of long-term bonds, was offered in the form of one-year certificates—at the high rate of 2⅝ per cent. Even so, government issues continued to go down in the market as investors found the coupon rates less and less attractive in comparison with commercial rates. The turning point came early in June after a "sell-off" that pushed the market for government 2½ per cent long-term bonds down to 89⅞ and the price of the new 3¼'s down to 98½. At that point the Federal Reserve moved in with open-market purchases to check the drop and push the price of the new bonds back toward par. Later in June the Federal Reserve took a major step to reverse the tight money trend by lowering the reserve requirements for its member banks. Interest rates eased off but never got back as low as they had been before Humphrey's controversial bond issue. The average time to maturity of the public debt grew shorter, contrary to the initial hopes of the administration.

Humphrey later insisted that the tightening and subsequent slight easing of credit was exactly what the administration had had in mind. Nevertheless he had, as *Fortune* put it, "pricked the Eisenhower bubble on the boom."[17] There were portents of a business downturn. The Treasury's machinery and the national credit system had proven responsive—almost too responsive—to the new administration's touch.

Hopes for a Tax Cut

As Joseph Dodge worked over the Truman budget in the spring of 1953, and the controversial interest rate episode was unfolding, Eisenhower and Humphrey were also involved in a legislative maneuver on tax policy. The specific question was whether there should be an early tax reduction. Two major cuts were scheduled by acts of previous

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27; *Business Week* (Apr. 18, 25, May 2, 16, 30, June 6, 13, 27, 1953); Arthur F. Burns, *Prosperity Without Inflation* (1957), p. 30.

Congresses. A special Korean war corporate excess profits tax was due to expire on June 30, 1953, and personal income taxes were to return to pre-Korean rates on January 1, 1954. In addition, Representative Dan Reed, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, got the jump on the administration with his bill, H R. 1, pushing the income tax cut ahead to June 30 so that both special rates would go out together. These changes would cost the Treasury several billion dollars in fiscal 1954.

There was from the beginning a great deal of doubt among administration leaders that these cuts could be afforded, much as they were desired. Eisenhower was all for fiscal prudence. In his State of the Union address in February, he said: "Reduction of taxes will be justified only as we show we can succeed in bringing the budget under control. . . . Until we can determine the extent to which expenditures can be reduced, it would not be wise to reduce our revenues." Two days later Secretary Humphrey opened the administration's courtship of the crusty, seventy-eight year old Reed at a "get-acquainted" luncheon.

Such hints did not deter Reed, however, who continued to gather support for his bill among Republican congressmen and business groups. On February 9, Eisenhower cautioned the legislative leaders against premature commitment to a tax cut, and they agreed to try to slow Reed down. This had little effect. On February 16, the Ways and Means Committee reported out the Reed bill. At his first press conference, held the following day, Eisenhower reiterated that much as he deplored high taxes, he did not believe that revenue should be reduced until an end of deficits clearly was in sight. However, he avoided direct comment on the Reed bill or any firm statement of the administration's plans.[18]

During March and April the administration leaders stalled on the tax question while they worked over the Truman budget. While he never closed the door completely to some sort of tax "adjustment" or "reform" in this session, Eisenhower continued to stress the principle that the budget must be under control before revenues could be reduced. He and other administration leaders made speeches to influential business groups, emphasizing their determination to get taxes down but pleading for support for a prudent fiscal policy. Meanwhile the House leaders kept Reed's bill bottled up in the Rules Committee. After wait-

[18] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60; report of Eisenhower's press conference, *New York Times* (Feb. 18, 1953).

ing several weeks, Reed filed a discharge petition, but he could not get enough signatures to pry it loose.[19]

Early in May the administration presented its defense and mutual security estimates, which completed the revision of the Truman budget and showed a substantial deficit still remaining. Humphrey told a Senate committee that it might even be necessary to raise the statutory ceiling on the national debt.[20] Hopes for a tax cut received another jolt when the staff of the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation, the congressional body of experts, released revenue estimates for fiscal 1954 that were even lower than the last previous administration figures. Reed refused to give up, however, attacking the administration for hoisting "the white flag of surrender." Senator Taft, both in the legislative leaders' confidential talks with the President and in statements to the press, strongly urged the administration to come forward with a specific tax proposal.

On May 19, Eisenhower unveiled his program, in the strongest possible context. He made a major radio address to the public on the subject of military strength and economic strength—the administration's central policy problem since the talks on the *Helena.* He explained that his revised defense budget was intended to strike a reasonable balance between the requirements of security and a healthy economy. On this foundation, he made his tax proposals: extend the excess profits tax for six months beyond June 30; allow the personal income tax reduction to go into effect in January 1954, instead of earlier as provided in the Reed bill; postpone for one year an increase in the social security tax rate scheduled for January 1954; and postpone certain other reductions in excises and corporate income taxes scheduled for April 1954.[21]

A Battle With Dan Reed

This assertion of leadership came after several weeks in which the administration had been noticeably faltering in its relations with Congress. Public and legislative response was excellent. The Reed bill, which would have taken an extra $1½ billion out of 1954 revenues, was politically dead.

[19] *Ibid.* (Mar. 17, 19, 20, 21, Apr. 14, 1953); *Washington Post* (Apr. 17, 1953).

[20] This was described as ". . . the biggest bucket of cold water dumped on both the rebel congressional tax-cutting drive and the orthodox effort to balance the budget since the Eisenhower Administration took office." *Ibid.* (May 9, 1953).

[21] White House Press Release (May 19, 1953).

But in another respect Reed now had the administration at a disadvantage. The date for the expiration of the excess profits tax was only six weeks away, and it would take quick legislative action to get through Eisenhower's request for an extension—action that normally would originate in Reed's Ways and Means committee. Reed immediately made it plain that if the administration and the House leadership would not pass his tax bill, he would not pass theirs. He served additional notice that any attempt to put pressure on the committee or by-pass it with parliamentary hocus-pocus might prevent the committee from acting on other legislation the administration had asked for, such as an extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act and some social security modifications. "When I fight, I fight," said Reed.[22] Thus the battle was joined, the stakes being an estimated $800 million in revenue for 1954.

The next round clearly went to Reed. Treasury Undersecretary Folsom, who had been doing missionary work with business groups, asked the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce to reconsider their earlier statements of opposition to any extension of the excess profits measure. Reed immediately threatened the administration with an investigation to see if the anti-lobbying laws were being violated. The NAM and the Chamber announced that they had re-examined the matter and were still opposed.[23]

After several days of maneuvering, the Republican legislative leaders, strongly backed by the Democrats on Reed's committee, persuaded Reed to let go of the reciprocal trade bill by promising that they would not try to add an excess profits tax rider on the Senate or House floor.[24] However, Reed continued to stall on a tax bill, refusing to convene the committee. Speaker Martin and the other House leaders could not persuade him. Eisenhower called him in for a special chat at the White House, but without results. The administration did not give up but continued to bring pressure on the House leadership, taking a much firmer stand than was its custom on legislative matters. After several compromise proposals failed, the Rules Committee brought Reed to bay; in an emotional three-hour session, the committee overrode his protests and voted to take the drastic step of by-passing the Ways and Means committee and bringing a tax bill directly to the House floor.

[22] *New York Times* (May 20, 1953).
[23] *Ibid.* (June 3, 4, and 5, 1953).
[24] *Washington Post* (June 6 and 7, 1953).

Democratic congressmen jeered at the Republicans for using the steam roller on one of their own chairmen, and a number of them announced that, although they were for an extension, they would not support such a procedure. Joe Martin, however, claimed to have the necessary votes lined up.

A showdown was averted at the last minute when four high-ranking Republican members of Reed's committee, who had previously been on the fence but were concerned both about the precedent of by-passing the committee and the prospect of a bitter floor fight centering around the old chairman, went to the House leaders and promised to get a bill out of the committee somehow if they could have a little more time. Martin and Halleck took this way out.[25] Several days later, Reed called a meeting of the committee to consider other matters. The members took him by surprise, seized parliamentary control of the committee, overrode his attempt to adjourn, and voted to report the excess profits bill. The bill was quickly brought to the floor and passed. Reed, incredulous that his party and the House were using him this way, fought every step. Senate action followed. The bill was made retroactive to July 1, so that no revenue was lost.

Against the Debt Ceiling

By staving off Reed's income tax proposal and getting the excess profits tax extended, the administration had improved revenue prospects by almost $2.5 billion and reduced the estimated deficit for 1954 to $3.9 billion (as compared to $9.9 estimated by Truman).[26] A problem still remained, however, for the national debt at that moment was over $272 billion and was forbidden by law to exceed $275 billion. The administration began to prepare the public and Congress for quick action before the end of the session to raise the debt ceiling. Opposition immediately appeared on Capitol Hill, most notably by Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, who had long made this a personal issue. Although a Democrat and no longer chairman of the Finance Committee, Byrd was a dominant figure from whom both Republican and Democratic conservatives would take signals. Here the administration was up against

[25] *New York Times* (June 30, 1953).

[26] *Ibid.* (July 31, 1953). A more complete roundup on the fiscal situation a few weeks later put it at $3.8 billion; Bureau of the Budget, "Review of the 1954 Budget" (mimeo Aug. 27, 1953).

an even more formidable opponent than Dan Reed—one who furthermore had all the advantage of the legislative situation on his side because of the nearness of adjournment.

On July 30, the administration officially requested Congress to raise the ceiling to $290 billion. To assure the best possible reception, Humphrey and Dodge briefed the press beforehand, and Eisenhower called Byrd to the White House hoping to get his support.[27] The House of Representatives, with Dan Reed now cooperating, promptly passed the bill. But in the Senate it was a different story. Humphrey and Dodge explained the situation to the Finance Committee. If the government was to meet its bills during the coming fiscal year, the ceiling would have to be adjusted; otherwise there might be a crisis. They assured the senators that they really had no intention of pushing the debt past about $277 billion; the other $13 billion was for elbow room.

These earnest arguments made no impact. Later in the day Byrd and his colleagues voted, by a large majority, to pigeonhole the proposal.

With this firm setback and Congress about to go home, there was little the administration could do. Eisenhower announced that he would try to stay within the ceiling, although it might be necessary to call a special session of Congress before January to consider the matter again. Humphrey prepared to scrape the bottom of the Treasury's cash barrel, and Dodge served notice on the departments and agencies that they would have to keep their spending well below the sums that had just been appropriated.[28] The debt bumped hard against the ceiling in the next few months, and cash reserves at times were perilously low, but the administration managed to live under the ceiling until the following year when Mr. Byrd bowed to necessity and consented to an adjustment.

ROUNDING THE CORNER

The preceding partial account of events during the early months of the Eisenhower administration should be sufficient to suggest the curi-

[27] *New York Times* (July 31, 1953); Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 233, 235.

[28] Edward F. Ryan, "U. S. Debt Problem," *Washington Post* (Aug. 10, 1953); White House press release, Aug. 11, 1953; *Washington Post* (Aug. 12, 1953).

ously indecisive nature of executive-legislative relations in that period.[29] Eisenhower came on the scene with tremendous public support which, it seemed to many observers, might have been converted into legislative influence, resulting in dramatic achievements during the traditional honeymoon with Congress. Eisenhower, however, chose not to be that kind of President. Both his view of the office and his assessment of the political situation led him to take a cautious tack. He was conscious of the deep divisions within his party, reluctant to antagonize anyone unnecessarily, determined to accord Congress its rightful place as an equal branch of the government, and hopeful that by conciliation he could gradually soften up the Republican right wing and unify the party in a position of moderation. He was also anxious to get properly organized and fearful of premature commitments. The legislation he requested was limited in both scope and amount, much of it demanded by previously established deadlines and a need to keep the government going rather than by deliberate choice.

The first three months of the session brought relatively little legislative output. Eisenhower tried to proceed by mutual agreement with the legislative leaders, particularly Taft, and was reluctant to bring pressure on Congress. The legislative leaders, in turn, were reluctant to bring disciplinary pressure on their own members except in the most extreme cases. A great deal of negotiating energy was expended in smothering unwelcome proposals and in steering through a few small things that had been allowed to become big things. Meanwhile deadlines imposed by the expiration of important temporary legislation approached rapidly, and complete absence of prospective agreement had stopped progress toward such major goals as revising the Taft-Hartley Act and extending social security coverage.

Beginning in May, Eisenhower began to act more vigorously. In his address to the country and in discussions with legislative leaders he defended his budget, for the most part successfully, against demands both for more and for less spending. He also rallied Congress to join him on the ground of fiscal prudence to stave off demands for premature tax cuts. Several additional measures were squeezed through, so that by the end of the session Eisenhower was able to claim a re-

[29] This chapter has dealt mainly with domestic economic policy; foreign affairs and matters relating primarily to the civil service will be covered in subsequent chapters.

markably high percentage of his official proposals enacted by Congress.[30]

Nevertheless, he suffered some severe rebuffs, such as on the foreign assistance appropriation and on the proposal to raise the debt ceiling. It has been recorded by the more-or-less authorized historian of the first Eisenhower administration that by the end of the legislative session, the President was chafing in frustration, despairing of ever bringing the Republican conservatives into the Twentieth Century, and speculating with his associates about the possibility of a major party realignment.[31] At the same time, it appeared to most observers that he had been strangely inhibited in the use of presidential power; he had not fully used his influence as leader of the people, leader of the party, and Chief Executive to mobilize legislative support in the pinches. Despite the speculation about party realignment, he had worked almost entirely with the official Republican leaders and been more than a little insensitive to the Democrats who came to his aid on many issues.[32] To be sure, the Republicans were perhaps more dedicated to liquidation than to legislation, and staving off reactionary drives without a major party split had been a considerable accomplishment. Nevertheless, a rare opportunity had slipped away.

Peace in Korea and the Death of Taft

The Eisenhower administration's maturing process was slow and uneven, so that the total appearance of being slightly disorganized and off balance persisted well into the first term. However, looking backward, the late summer of 1953 appears to mark a preliminary turning point. Several events were significant.

First was the truce in Korea, signed on July 26. This brought a great lift in the morale of the American public, which had long been disturbed and divided over the Korean issue. While no one pretended

[30] The most standardized box score, kept by *Congressional Quarterly,* showed an adoption rate of 72.7 per cent for Eisenhower proposals in the 1953 session—a far higher rate than he was to achieve in later years. The explanation was that there were only 44 official proposals, as compared to a normal rate of over 200 per session, and only a few were controversial. *Congressional Quarterly Service, Weekly Report,* Vol. 17 (Sept. 18, 1959), p. 1275.

[31] Donovan, *op. cit.,* pp. 149-52.

[32] For that matter, he had been insensitive to the "Eisenhower Republicans." With the decision to work with Taft, such Senators as Duff and Saltonstall, who had been expected to speak for the administration on Capitol Hill, were relegated to back seats

that the truce had solved any basic problems in foreign relations, it relaxed tensions for the moment, brought the boys home, and ended a major drain on American resources. Eisenhower had played the part of the peacemaker and was even more firmly established in popular favor.

A second major event was the death of Senator Taft, on July 31. This was a sharp personal blow to Eisenhower, for despite their frequent exasperation with each other, he and Taft had grown greatly in friendship and mutual respect over the previous few months. Taft's absence made a subtle but significant change in Eisenhower's relations with Congress and the conservative Republicans generally. It introduced a new element of contingency, for without the Senator's powerfully supporting, restraining, and at times protecting influence, the administration was thrown more on its own resources. None of the remaining legislative leaders could speak with Taft's authority at the White House, or command the influence Taft had in Congress. The administration now had more freedom both to follow its own impulses and to make its own mistakes; there was no one with even the potential power to discipline the congressional radical right. One can only speculate, but it is reasonable to assume that the problem of the administration's relations with Senator McCarthy, which came to a crisis in the next session of Congress, would have been handled differently had Taft been on the scene.

Other late summer changes in the situation resulted not from specific events but from the inexorable progress of the governmental calendar. The administration was now six months old, and for Eisenhower's appointees the shock of first immersion in Washington was beginning to wear off. The traumatic experience of the emergency budget and program revisions was over. Congress, after completing action on the tax and appropriation bills and refusing to increase postal rates and raise the debt ceiling, went home on August 4. With a prospect of five relatively quiet months ahead, the administration could settle down to serious work on its policy agenda—work to be reflected both in executive action and in budgetary and legislative proposals when Congress returned in January. In many respects, the toughest decisions still lay ahead, but the administration was getting in better shape to face them. Feeling that the worst must now be over, Eisenhower escaped from Washington at the end of the legislative session to begin a Colorado vacation.

Durkin Departs

But there was one more thing. A few weeks later the experimental effort to win support from organized labor ended. From the beginning, Secretary of Labor Martin P. Durkin had encountered obstacles in the way of his main goal, which was to carry out Eisenhower's campaign promise to amend the Taft-Hartley Act. A preliminary attempt to get management and labor to agree on amendments had been fruitless. So had discussions between the Departments of Commerce and Labor. Finally Durkin had negotiated with the White House staff a 19-point proposal which, he understood, the President approved and intended to submit to Congress before adjournment. But on the day he thought the proposal was to be submitted, Senator Taft died, and it was held up. In the next few days the substance of the proposal got around Washington and was leaked to the press, arousing conservative opposition. Congress adjourned and Eisenhower left on vacation without the message being sent.[33]

Durkin now found the White House staff back-tracking on the 19 points. Catching Eisenhower alone in New York, when the President interrupted his vacation to make a speech there, Durkin got what he thought was a promise that the proposal would be submitted intact. But back in Washington he found the White House staff still unwilling to go along. Durkin forced the issue by submitting a letter of resignation. When Eisenhower returned to Washington to attend Chief Justice Vinson's funeral, there was a showdown conference. The President now made it clear that he did not consider himself committed to the 19 points, and Durkin's resignation was accepted. Durkin told the AFL convention a few days later that keeping agreements was a principle he, as a labor leader, had been trained to live by. Eisenhower's only public comment was that he had never broken any agreements that he had known about.[34]

In October, Eisenhower appointed James P. Mitchell, a former de-

[33] Durkin thought he had been sabotaged by the White House staff. See Martin P. Durkin, "The Labor Program: Why I Resigned," *Vital Speeches*, Vol. 20, pp. 5-8 (Oct. 15, 1953). Others thought the intervention of Nixon and some of the senators had stopped the message. See Joseph A. Loftus, "Message on Labor Blocked by Nixon," *New York Times* (Aug. 6, 1953).

[34] See Durkin, *op. cit.;* Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 106; *Washington Post* (Sept. 11, 1953); *New York Times* (Sept. 11, 13, 1953).

partment store executive and labor relations expert, then serving as Assistant Secretary of the Army, to be Secretary of Labor.

RETRENCHMENT CONTINUED

Most of the major issues of domestic policy came back, in one way or another, to the federal budget. In its response to powerful conflicting pressures focusing on the budget for fiscal 1955, the administration grew toward maturity and confirmed its essential middle-of-the-road character. When the President left Washington for his vacation, the main objective seemed to be the same as before: keep spending down. The estimates for fiscal 1955 were already being assembled in the departments for review by the Budget Bureau during the autumn and presentation to Congress in January.

About this time Joseph Dodge wrote a letter to all department heads, by direction of the President, which indicated the administration's response to the failure of Congress to lift the debt ceiling and laid down the official line for the new budget. Reminding all agencies of the importance of the first budget to be completely prepared by the new administration, Dodge hammered hard on the economy theme. He warned that additional expenditure reductions, perhaps even greater than the ones that had been made in the Truman 1954 budget, would be required. Departments were to start cutting their 1954 spending below the sums appropriated and give every activity the most searching review before submitting requests for 1955. The administration's policy, Dodge pointed out, was not merely to perform existing functions at lower cost but to scale down or eliminate federal activities whenever possible. Agencies should go as far as they could within existing authority and not hesitate to propose reorganizations or legislation that would open the way to further economy. Dodge's letter was backed up by a shorter letter from the President himself, asking every member of the administration to cooperate in this vital effort.[35] With normal Republican predilections strengthened by such reminders of the administration's budgetary situation, the drive for retrenchment that had

[35] Eisenhower's letter was released to the press, thus calling public attention to the administration's continued drive for economy. White House Press Release, Aug. 11, 1953. Dodge's budget policy letter, although not officially released, also found its way to the press. See *Wall Street Journal* (Aug. 12, 1953).

been touched off by the review of Truman's budget continued throughout 1953. The issues raised and actions taken ranged from the highest levels of public policy down to the most trivial sort of cheeseparing.

Searching for Republican Policy

The greatest spending and potential economies were, of course, in the military departments. A general review of foreign policy, strategic doctrine, and military policy had already been set in motion, with the object of finding a way to have security at a tolerable economic cost. But with the ending of the Korean war, it was possible to effect immediate savings by canceling contracts, reducing military personnel, and trimming operations of all sorts.

Throughout the domestic policy sphere, there was a drive for policy adjustments. One major possibility, both for saving money and moving toward the Republican objective of a free economy, seemed to lie in a revision of federal agricultural policy. The existing program of price supports for basic crops was costing the government billions of dollars annually and piling up substantial surpluses. Secretary of Agriculture Benson at the outset made known his hope to reduce the levels of support and perhaps eventually to eliminate them altogether, thus liberating farmers from government regulation, restoring a free market in commodities, and saving the government huge sums. In 1953 he began to experiment cautiously with his limited discretion under existing support laws. With the aid of a National Agricultural Advisory Commission heavily weighted with farm leaders of conservative tinge, he began to explore alternatives in preparation for submitting a comprehensive program to Congress in 1954.[36]

Another field where considerations of both economy and Republican philosophy pointed toward retrenchment was in the Department of Interior's program of building power dams and reclamation facilities in the Western states. Shortly after taking office, Secretary McKay responded to the administration's early economy orders by suspending plans for new construction starts and sharply scaling down the Truman administration's budget request for funds for existing projects. Congress made even further cuts. In May, McKay signified a change in

[36] For a preliminary assessment of the Republican impact on the Department of Agriculture, see Charles M. Hardin, "The Republican Department of Agriculture—A Political Interpretation," *Journal of Farm Economics,* Vol. 36 (May 1954), pp. 210-27.

the power policy of the department by withdrawing its official objection to a proposal by private utilities to develop the Hell's Canyon dam site in Idaho; the previous position had been that the national interest required the development of the site as part of a comprehensive federal water and power program.

In August, shortly after Dodge's exhortation to further economy, McKay issued—with the express approval of the President—a statement which came to be known as the "partnership policy" on public power. While acknowledging the federal government's responsibility to give leadership in resources development, the policy renounced any doctrine of federal "exclusive right or responsibility" for power projects in any area. In the future, the federal government would encourage others to undertake such projects and itself would concentrate on the projects beyond the capacity of local public and private enterprise. The policy also provided for a curtailment on the building of federally owned transmission lines and other aggressive marketing practices, and implied the possibility of higher rates for public power in the future. The department announced that work on current projects would continue (although at a slower rate than previously), but no new starts were indicated. The new policy was immediately attacked by public power supporters; but it suggested a larger role for government than was desired by those who had joined former President Hoover in attacking "creeping socialism" and in hoping for disposal of federal facilities to private interests.[37]

In general, however, it proved difficult for the administration to make rapid progress toward retrenchment. The large federal expenditures were concentrated in a small number of programs. In most of them the requirements for spending were established by law and subject to executive discretion only to a minor extent, and in only a few areas was there really much hope that a major policy change would be politically feasible. Eisenhower was committed in advance to preserving social security and other welfare programs. Services and pensions to veterans were a major expense, but the administration's attempts at retrenchment in this area were rebuffed by the veterans and their friends in Congress. There were proposals for curtailment of federal grants to states for highways; but it was soon apparent that this federal burden

[37] *New York Times* (Aug. 19 and 23, 1953).

could not be dropped unless the states picked it up, and the states were prepared to do so, if at all, only if the revenue from the federal gasoline tax was made available to them. In that event, the federal budget would be no closer to balancing than before.

One policy movement on which virtually all Republicans could unite was a drive to "get the government out of business." This took two forms. One was to search out and sell to private owners miscellaneous federal enterprises that had been supplying products or services to the public. Thus the Inland Waterways Corporation, a relic of earlier efforts to stimulate barge traffic on the Mississippi, was sold, as were such properties as an alcohol manufacturing plant in Iowa and a hotel in the Virgin Islands. A related and more important policy was to begin purchasing from private sources goods or services that the government previously had been providing for itself. With businessmen (especially potential private contractors) applauding loudly, the Defense Department went about closing up its clothing factories, paint factories, scrap metal processing plants, chemical plants, ice cream plants, bakeries, and other facilities that reflected the armed services' historic drive for self-sufficiency. In all departments there were attempts to rely more on private enterprise for such services as transportation and warehousing.[38]

An interesting development of this period was the so-called "lease-purchase" plan for the construction of public buildings. The idea was that private builders would agree to construct a building on a given site and lease it to the government for 40 or 50 years. At the end of that time, the lease payments having amortized the builder's investment and returned him a suitable profit, title to the facility would pass to the government. The advantage of this, in addition to whatever virtue there might be in having private corporations erect and technically hold title to public buildings, lay in the fact that the government's expenditure would be stretched out over the lease period rather than concentrated during the construction. Such an arrangement would make it possible for the Eisenhower administration to start a building program without making a big dent in the current budget.[39]

[38] A preliminary report on this movement was in *New York Times* (July 12, 1954).

[39] *Washington Post* (Nov. 16 and 23, 1953). This plan was put into effect on a limited basis in 1954 but abandoned in 1957 because of feeling in Congress that the long-range costs were excessive. However, a related program of straight leasing of privately constructed and owned buildings for post offices was continued. *Wall Street Journal* (June 16, 1960).

No Economies Overlooked

During the summer and fall of 1953, Joseph Dodge bombarded the agencies with memoranda pointing the way to operating economies. One directive called for tightening up on the purchase and use of government automobiles. Another announced that in the future each government payroll clerk would be expected to serve the needs of 250 employees, instead of the former allowance of one for 235. As an example to others, the bureau announced the closing of its own four small field offices. Agencies were instructed to keep their postage costs to a minimum and to follow economical mailing practices, such as using standard rather than odd-sized envelopes. A little later, agencies were directed to re-examine the licensing and other services for which the public was charged fees, and take steps to raise the fees to levels equivalent to the cost of service.[40]

Soon Dodge's releases began to report achievements. On September 30 he announced that Budget Bureau restrictions had largely put a stop to the usual agency practice of last-minute buying in May and June just before appropriations ran out; a few agencies found guilty of that practice at the end of fiscal 1953 had had equivalent funds impounded out of their 1954 appropriations. On October 8, capitalizing on a visit by the President to certain federal installations during his vacation visit to Denver, the Budget Bureau announced that a survey had led to savings at an annual rate of $3 million in government personnel costs, rent, and other expenses in the Denver area. A little later Dodge announced that as a result of the new administration's efforts the government's fleet of 62,000 cars would be reduced to 55,000 by the end of the fiscal year.[41]

A Threat of Recession

As the drive to reduce federal spending and balance the fiscal 1955 budget picked up momentum, there began to be signs of a business recession. The Treasury and Federal Reserve had taken steps during the summer of 1953 to ease the credit situation resulting from Secretary

[40] Bureau of the Budget press releases, Aug. 10, 20, 24, Sept. 23, and Nov. 5, 1953. The publicity given these directives caused some questioning in governmental circles accustomed to a publicity-shy Budget Bureau.

[41] Bureau of the Budget press releases, Sept. 30 and Oct. 8, 1953, and Jan. 11, 1954.

Humphrey's explosion into the bond market, but other depressing forces were at work. The economy was beginning to feel the cutbacks in defense contracting and other government commitments ordered by the administration early in the spring and continuing more rapidly after the end of the Korean war. Consumer spending was slowing down, retailers were working off inventories, and output and employment were slipping in key industries. While the decline in the private sector was apparently due in part to causes deeper than the government's recent actions, the administration's deflationary policies clearly were related.[42] The coincidence, in any event, was politically dangerous.

By this time the Council of Economic Advisers was back in full operation under the leadership of Arthur F. Burns. At the first cabinet meeting after Eisenhower returned from his vacation, held on September 25, Burns reported that the indicators were pointing to a readjustment. While the situation was not yet serious, it could become so, and planning of countermeasures was in order. This touched off a general discussion of the administration's position. Eisenhower reminded the group that the Republicans had promised that there would be no more depressions of the 1929 sort. Burns pointed out that the excess profits tax and the special Korean emergency income tax rate were scheduled to expire at the end of the calendar year; this would leave an extra $7 billion to the private economy during 1954. He doubted that a big program of direct federal expenditures was required. He rather leaned toward tax, monetary, and credit policies that would encourage private investment and spending. This general line met with approval.[43] For the next several months the administration played the economic game cautiously.

DOWN THE MIDDLE

On October 12, just as the departmental estimates for 1955 were coming into the Budget Bureau, Dodge made his first major speech since assuming office, to a friendly home-town audience in Detroit. His remarks reflected his continued assurance that spending must and could

[42] For an analysis of the origins and course of this recession see Bert G. Hickman, "The Contraction of 1953-1954," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 40 (February 1958), pp. 36-48. Also available as Brookings Institution Reprint 22.

[43] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-11.

be cut; he was able to point to certain accomplishments in that respect. However, while he said nothing about the prospect of a recession, or the revenue losses such an event might entail, his speech was essentially a detailed explanation of why the administration was not making faster progress toward balancing the budget. He emphasized the complicated nature of the federal budget and administrative system and the huge financial obligations inherited from the previous administration.[44] He also called attention to the important areas of federal expenditure frozen under existing law and the necessity for continuing large expenditures for national security. Dodge asked his hearers to help the administration by supporting its efforts to cut spending and restraining their demands for governmental services. The warning that the budget might not be balanced in 1955 was implicit.

The Eisenhower Legislative Program

Deepening autumn brought further decline in the economic situation and the beginning of talk, mostly in labor and Democratic circles, of a big pump-priming program. The administration officially deprecated the need for such a thing. Nevertheless, the climate was favorable to a new development within the administration—a drive for a real legislative program for 1954.

In the 1953 congressional session, Eisenhower had made only limited use of the facilities and established procedures, centering around the Budget Bureau, for the development and advancement of the presidential legislative program. There were apparently several reasons for this: the administration's newness on the job, unfamiliarity with the issues, reluctance to embrace behavior patterns associated with Truman, ideas about deferring to Congress, and perhaps a conservative instinct that

[44] Dodge was like other administration leaders in tending to minimize the effect of the Korean war in producing these obligations and attributing them to spendthrift policies under Truman. For example: ". . . the government's situation, when the new administration took office, can be likened to the status of a family that had consistently lived well beyond its means; had five years of real adversity (related to World War II); had only three times in 20 years provided itself with more income than it had spent; had acquired a debt over four times its yearly income; owed more than a year's income on C.O.D.'s that will have to be paid on delivery; normally had about one month's living expenses in the bank; had relatively little margin before reaching a fixed limit on its borrowing; was aware of an impending ten per cent reduction in its income; and had no immediate plans for changing its habits." Joseph M. Dodge, "The Budgetary and Fiscal Problems of our Government," address before the Economic Club of Detroit. Bureau of the Budget press release, Oct. 12, 1953 (mimeo.).

there was too much legislation already.[45] But now the cycle was coming around again, and this time Eisenhower and his aides could see how the bureaucratic routine might serve their purposes.

The regular Budget Bureau call for estimates for fiscal 1955, distributed to the agencies on June 30, had contained its usual language inviting the submission of legislative proposals and supporting budgetary data. Shortly thereafter, Eisenhower, apparently beginning to be concerned about making himself more effective with Congress, expressed interest in getting an early start on the 1954 State of the Union message.[46] This led to a briefing by the Budget Bureau on the legislative programing procedures. The briefing in turn led to an Eisenhower letter reminding all department heads that they were supposed to be re-thinking the missions of their agencies and asking them for ideas that might go into the State of the Union message. At this time—midsummer—it was assumed that the suggestions would be primarily for retrenchment.

The Budget Bureau call and the President's letter offered a welcome outlet to forces gathering within the departments. The top-level studying, consulting, and surveying of policy of the past several months was beginning to bear fruit. As expected, there were ideas for scaling down federal obligations, getting the government out of business, giving functions back to the states, and so forth. But these accounted for only a few of the hundreds of proposals that came welling up from the administrative depths. Because of the previous year's virtual freeze on new proposals, there was a double crop of requests for minor clarifying, perfecting, and authorizing legislation of the sort required to keep the governmental machinery operating smoothly. In addition there were requests for modest improvements and extensions of programs in several fields; the advent of the new administration had not completely broken the momentum of on-going programs.

By now, some of the Republican departmental executives were beginning to have conflicting impulses. They had, to be sure, come to Washington to cut down big government, and official budget policy was still prodding them in that direction. But after six months of cutting down,

[45] Joseph Dodge, in his Detroit speech just cited, quoted a British author's statement of preference for a regime "dedicated to the gradual and careful unmaking of laws."

[46] This was, it should be recalled, the period of his battle with Dan Reed, his rebuff on the mutual security appropriation, and other frustrations that stimulated talk of party realignment.

firing, and reorganizing, they were beginning to feel an identity with and concern for the programs under their care. They had begun to perceive the needs felt by the bureaucracy and the relevant clientele groups. They remembered that this was not supposed to be a reactionary, stand-pat administration; Eisenhower had promised also to build and improve. It was a large, mixed bag of proposals—some 276 in all—that passed departmental screening and came in to the Budget Bureau and the White House.

White House aides dug into the pile and, with the coaching of the Budget Bureau's legislative reference staff, got the sort of education in the continuing business of government that they had passed up when the Truman staff offered it to them during the transitional period. The White House now embraced and became enthusiastic over a concept it had not been able to see in early 1953—the planned, comprehensive, co-ordinated presidential legislative program. A busy season of checking, studying, and inquiring followed, winnowing down the proposals from 276 to 75, and finally to 43. Those that survived the screening included some predictable items on the conservative side. However, Eisenhower moderation had led to the elimination of most of the extreme ideas for turning the clock back. In fact, careful study plus the mood of receptivity to "positive" ideas created by the threat of recession had produced some proposals that would require a little spending.

In November and December 1953, there was an elaborate routine of cabinet review and clearance, followed by three days of White House briefing of the Republican congressional leadership. All the tactics of publicity buildup were employed. The second Eisenhower State of the Union address, delivered on January 7, transmitted a full legislative program. It included not only flexible (lower) agricultural price supports, "incentive" modifications of the tax laws, and other conservative proposals, but also social security extension, extension of unemployment compensation, a push forward on housing, some new conservation project starts, and a plan for government underwriting of private health insurance plans. A well-staged sequence of special messages followed with details and draft legislation. These were far from radical proposals by New Deal and Fair Deal standards, but they represented a substantial shift from the emphasis of the previous year. They were a bid for recognition of Eisenhower as a sane progressive, a cautious response to the pressure for pump-priming that had been building up as the econ-

omy sagged.[47] While Eisenhower did not emerge in the 1954 congressional session as a masterful legislative leader of the Roosevelt type, he displayed far more interest in the progress of "his" program than he had in 1953. He began to use his influence more effectively, while still trying not to offend the institutional sensibilities of Congress.[48]

A Cautious Budget

The fiscal 1955 budget presented to Congress two weeks later further illustrated Eisenhower's desire to avoid extremes. Some parts reflected the continuation of the antispending drive, most notably the military budget. The Army, to the considerable discomfort of the military chiefs, had been handed a $4 billion cut. Foreign aid was cut a half billion below the level that Eisenhower had considered so unsatisfactory the previous year. But other functional headings showed only modest trimming, and in a few areas there were moderate increases. To the great disappointment of the economizing wing of the administration, it had not been possible to present a balanced budget. With revenue estimates down due to the January tax cuts and the uncertain economic outlook, the forecast was for a $2.9 billion deficit (only slightly less than the $3.3 billion deficit then estimated for fiscal 1954).[49]

Riding Out a Recession

Having taken its stand, the administration settled down to a careful watch of the economic situation. The President's economic report to Congress that followed the budget depicted an administration calm but alert, willing to act promptly if conditions required it but determined not to be stampeded.

The worst of the recession, it turned out, was yet to come. The unemployment figure for January increased sharply to over 3 million, due partly, the administration felt, to a refined method of collecting the statistics. Unemployment continued to rise in February and March,

[47] For his account of building the legislative program of 1954, the author has relied heavily on Richard E. Neustadt, "Presidency and Legislation: Planning the President's Program," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 49 (December 1955), pp. 980-1021. See also Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "How Eisenhower Shaped a Program," *Washington Post* (Jan. 25, 1954).

[48] See Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-36.

[49] *New York Times* (Jan. 22, 1954).

reaching what later turned out to have been the peak of 3.7 million in March.[50] There was increasing political pressure for a public works program to counteract the continued decline in defense spending. Eisenhower ordered a speed-up of public works planning but refused to go further. During the spring the previously planned income tax cut of January 1 began to take effect, and the administration took several other actions to loosen the strings on governmental spending and private credit. Democrats in Congress proposed an increase in individual income-tax exemptions, but the administration blocked it. There were some anxious moments, but by the time the political attack on the administration reached its height, about May, the indicators were steadying. By the end of the year a boom was under way.[51]

Thus Eisenhower persisted in a course of moderate financial conservatism. At the end of fiscal 1954—the Truman budget as revised by Eisenhower—there was a net deficit of $3.1 billion. In fiscal 1955, under the first regular Eisenhower budget, the deficit rose to $4.1 billion because of the 1953-54 recession. The fiscal 1956 budget (presented in January 1955) contemplated still another deficit, much to the chagrin of the economy wing of the administration. During 1955, however, economic conditions and federal revenue picked up so rapidly that in January 1956 the administration was able to anticipate small surpluses for both fiscal 1956 and 1957. The campaign goal of cutting spending to $60 billion was never achieved. The bottom was just under $65 billion in fiscal 1955, and after that the budget crept up again under the impact of new programs and defense needs. But Eisenhower was in the enviable position of entering an election year with a record of tax cuts and a balanced budget.

RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

How to assess the significance of the domestic policy adjustments under the Eisenhower administration? Certainly they were far narrower

[50] This was 5.8 per cent of the labor force, seasonally unadjusted. According to seasonally adjusted unemployment figures, which were worked out later, the peak did not come until September 1954, when it reached 6.2 per cent.

[51] The administration's response to the recession is described in Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-22; Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-33; Murphy, in *Fortune* (February 1956), pp. 226-31. For a more technical analysis see Hickman, *op. cit.*

in scope than had been intended, even by the relatively moderate Republicans. Some policy changes, to be sure, meant a great deal to immediately affected interests, but in broad perspective the changes were mostly in the nature of shifts of emphasis, trimming here and there, and arresting temporarily the growth of big government. Did this prove that the administration had been bamboozled by the bureaucracy? On the whole it does not appear so. The Republicans found far less administrative waste than they had expected, and in policy terms, the bureaucracy was responsive enough when the Republicans gave it new directions. The budget provided a framework for achieving as much change as the Republicans were willing to assume responsibility for and able to carry through Congress. The problem was that executing a conservative program turned out to be far more difficult than had been perceived from outside the government. It was found, when specific federal programs were put under close inspection, that governmental action had been woven into the fabric of American political, economic, and social expectations. To stop major programs, to repeal laws, to return to the simple, inexpensive government of yesteryear, would have had consequences the administration could not persuade a congressional majority to accept, even if it were willing to accept them itself. The budget, after all, was a device both for making the bureaucracy responsible to the President and for making the President responsible to Congress. And the power positions of interests, groups, sections, and parties in Congress had shifted only marginally. The Eisenhower electoral victory had not signified a fundamental political revolution.[52]

[52] For a perceptive account of the "discovery by the conservatives of why living fully in the conservative way in the modern world is so difficult as to be nearly impossible," see Edwin L. Dale, Jr., *Conservatives in Power: A Study in Frustration* (1960), p. 213.

CHAPTER 36

TOWARD PEACE AND SECURITY

Never before had an incoming President faced such a grave and complicated international situation as Dwight D. Eisenhower faced in 1953. The United States was locked in world-wide rivalry with the powerful communist bloc of nations, a rivalry that came to its sharpest focus in the two and a half year old war in Korea. The conflict had so far been limited to the Korean peninsula and to the use of conventional weapons, but there was no certainty that it would remain so. Modern weapons technology, just then in transition from the A-bomb to the H-bomb era, made all-out war with the Soviet Union almost too horrible to contemplate. Yet it had to be contemplated, and with a certain amount of sanguinity, because overt shrinking from it would increase the likelihood of Soviet pressure that might lead in the end to war anyway.

The means available to the new President were intricate: a world-wide system of alliances and international organizations that demanded constant attention; a Defense establishment in which the Secretary and his aides sat uneasily atop three huge, competitive services; and a vastly expanded State Department and foreign service, supplemented by agencies carrying on economic aid, technical assistance, information and propaganda, and intelligence programs overseas. Interpenetration of the foreign and domestic policy spheres, the increasing interest of Congress in investigations, and the need for annual appropriations of large sums for security and international purposes provided constant opportunities for legislative review and intervention, placing a heavy domestic political burden on the administration.

If stated broadly enough, Eisenhower's purposes could be endorsed by all Americans: to achieve an honorable peace in Korea; to maintain American and free world strength as a deterrent to further communist aggression or expansion; and ultimately to relax tensions and end the costly competition of the cold war. These goals would require continuation of most of the Truman administration's main lines of action. But Eisenhower had promised some new approaches, some important shifts of priority and emphasis. He and his party had several ideas and partial commitments that were not easy to reconcile.

The Republicans, in the age-old manner of opposition parties, had charged the Democrats with lack of vigor in upholding the American interest. There was talk of a firmer policy line to make clear to the Russians the depth of American determination, rekindle the flame of freedom in nations under Soviet domination, and stimulate greater anti-communist effort by other free nations. Those who took this view were inclined to be ultrasuspicious of Russian intentions and to feel that a satisfactory long-range relationship could be obtained, if at all, only by a clear show of physical and psychological preparedness to fight. And perhaps the way to begin was to force a showdown in Korea, taking whatever risk of World War III that might involve. But this boldness and emphasis on the Far East was not popular in Western Europe, or with many Americans who urged caution in the East and—above all—unity in the West. Firmness, patience, and willingness to negotiate, negotiate, negotiate, in a search for peaceful solutions were believed to be called for. Eisenhower had strong commitments in this direction too, being almost a personal symbol of the western alliance as well as a strong believer in reasonableness and negotiation. Cutting across all international considerations were two great issues deeply rooted in domestic politics: First was the demand for a reduction of federal expenditures, taxes, commitments, and controls and a return to what most of Eisenhower's supporters would consider a more normal, healthy economic situation. Second was the need for the administration to satisfy itself, Congress, and the public that the men and institutions conducting foreign and military affairs, which had been battered by years of partisan warfare and charges ranging from mild incompetence to treasonable betrayal, truly merited the nation's confidence.

SECRETARY DULLES

In John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower found a strong Secretary of State —a man of substantial intellectual capacity, wide experience in foreign affairs, positive opinions, and great personal vigor. Dulles bridged about as well as anyone could the distance between left and right in the Republican party. Although they had not been well acquainted before the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower soon came to hold Dulles in high respect. As the administration matured, some of its members grew increasingly uneasy at Dulles' dogmatism, and the President's natural optimism and the Secretary's ingrained pessimism sometimes made their public statements differ in tone if not in intent. But Eisenhower rarely wavered in his political support of the Secretary and leaned on him heavily.

The Secretary and the Department

Dulles had in a sense been preparing to be Secretary of State all his life. But while a man of his talents and outlook might have slipped easily into the role during the nineteenth century, or even as late as the early 1930's, the nature of the office in 1953 made for certain difficulties. The State Department now employed over 30,000 people at home and abroad. Although only a fraction of these dealt with policy in any direct sense, foreign policy inevitably was to a considerable extent an organization product. But Dulles was not in the slightest degree an organization man. He was self-contained and self-confident, trained and matured as a lawyer and habituated by years of lonewolf operating as an advocate and negotiator. His recent experience in the government had been as a roving ambassador and, briefly, as a member of the Senate. The idea of being administrator and mouthpiece of a huge policy machine, served and guided by staff, was foreign and distasteful to him. Dulles was determined to avoid administrative burdens and be the primary policy maker himself.

The top political appointments to the department were made with this in mind. General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's old chief of staff (later ambassador to Moscow), was promoted from Director of Central Intelligence to Undersecretary of State, becoming one of the few high-

level "holdovers" in the new administration.[1] In order further to relieve Dulles and Smith, it had been decided at the Commodore to establish a new office, the Undersecretary for Administration. A bill to that effect was promptly introduced and became the first law signed by President Eisenhower. Donald B. Lourie, president of an Illinois cereal company, with no experience in government, was recruited for this office. Carl W. McCardle, a reporter and personal friend of Dulles, became Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs; Thruston B. Morton, a former congressman from Kentucky, became Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; and Walter S. Robertson, a banker from Virginia but a former officer of the department who had become highly critical of its China policy, became Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Herman Phleger, a San Francisco lawyer, was brought in as Legal Adviser to the Secretary. Another important appointment, which was apparently made at Lourie's initiative but with Dulles' approbation, was R. W. Scott McLeod to be the department's top security officer. McLeod was a former FBI investigator who had recently worked for Senator H. Styles Bridges and was close to the right-wing Republican group in the Senate.

Doubting that the men who had been policy advisers to Acheson could accommodate themselves to his policies and ways of operating, Dulles made many staff changes. The top members of the policy planning staff were replaced. The original formulator of the "containment" policy, George Kennan, then unassigned after a brief tour as ambassador in Moscow, was allowed to retire. Most of the Foreign Service officers holding top positions in the department were sent out to the field and others brought in. In due course, Republican political appointees succeeded Democratic political appointees in the prestige embassies, maintaining approximately the previous balance of political and career ambassadors.

As for the rest of the foreign affairs establishment, Dulles mainly asked that it not be a burden to him. Secretary Acheson had advised in their pre-inaugural talk that for the sake of better coordination the several overseas operating functions should be brought into much closer relationship with the department. Dulles took the opposite view and sought to shunt to others as many of these functions as he could. He

[1] Another was the new Secretary's brother, Allen W. Dulles, who moved up from Deputy to Director of the CIA with Smith's departure.

also apparently felt that the only way to keep the department from being a political millstone around his neck was to placate those who had demanded a thorough housecleaning.[2] His initial message to the staff stressed "positive loyalty" and seemed designed as much for external as for internal consumption. His first public address on television included prominent mention of the precautions being taken to assure the security of the department. Dulles instructed his subordinates to cooperate fully in the several congressional investigations then going on, including those being conducted by Senator McCarthy.[3] No politically responsible members of the new administration protested, or even were visible, as McCarthy browbeat civil servants, openly encouraged tale-bearing, and created havoc in an arm of the department, the International Information Administration. McLeod soon began a security review of the entire staff of the department and the Foreign Service. The purge that ensued, carried on in conjunction with an internal reorganization and a drastic reduction in force for economy reasons, brought the department to the verge of chaos.

Off to Europe

Secretary Dulles' initial venture into diplomacy set a pattern that was to become familiar. His first public speech contained a warning that if the Western European nations could not make greater progress toward economic and military unity, it would be necessary to "give a little rethinking" to American policy in that area. This was in effect a prod to Germany and France, particularly the latter, to ratify the European Defense Community treaty, which had been pending for some months. The implicit threat of reduction in economic and military aid, or possible withdrawal from Europe, was characterized in France as "brutal." Immediately after this speech, Dulles laid the foundation of his reputation as the roving Secretary of State by taking off on a ten-day whirlwind tour through the European capitals. His consultations calmed tensions a little and showed some promise of getting the EDC rolling again.

European leaders were, of course, anxious to re-establish contact with Eisenhower himself, and shortly after Dulles returned, there began a parade of distinguished visitors to Washington (resembling in many

[2] See James Reston in *New York Times* (Feb. 2, 1953).

[3] John R. Beal, *John Foster Dulles* (1957), p. 139. This was pursuant to Eisenhower's instructions at an early cabinet meeting.

ways the post-inaugural succession of visitors to FDR in 1933). Included were Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Chancellor of the Exchequer R. A. Butler of Great Britain, Premier René Mayer of France, and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of Germany. Such visitors were warned of American impatience for greater progress toward unity and more European contributions toward the common defense. In their various ways, the visitors expressed concern because the United States was on the one hand talking about a sterner line toward the Soviet bloc and on the other hand talking of economy and cutting back its mutual security contributions. Europe did not want to be caught in the middle and have a war fought over its prostrate form. European leaders also resented American criticism for not shouldering a greater share of the effort in Korea; the British and French had their own costly anticommunist wars in Malaya and Indo-China. In all the nations of the western alliance there were domestic pressures for more "independent" courses of action.[4]

THE DOMESTIC SIDE OF FOREIGN POLICY

Much of Eisenhower's appeal as a presidential candidate had been his reputation as a wise, moderate, esteemed figure in international affairs—a man to whom both the nation and the outside world could look for leadership. He did, indeed, have this stature, and in any event the responsibilities of leading the free world coalition now were an inescapable part of the Presidency. But his domestic and international constituencies were not easy to reconcile. During his early months in the White House, internal political considerations set limits to Eisenhower's diplomacy and sometimes seemed to take priority over the international sphere. The powers of Congress, which he had pledged in advance fully to respect, had to be reckoned with daily.

The Yalta Resolution: Partisanship and Bipartisanship

In his State of the Union message early in February, Eisenhower promised a foreign policy "developed and directed in the spirit of true bipartisanship." He soon found that this was not easy to achieve.

[4] See Brookings Institution, *Major Problems of United States Foreign Policy, 1954* (1954), pp. 5-8, 11-14.

Later in the same address he said: "We shall never acquiesce in the enslavement of any people in order to purchase fancied gain for ourselves. I shall ask the Congress . . . to join in an appropriate resolution making clear that this government recognizes no kind of commitment contained in secret understandings of the past . . . which permit this kind of enslavement." This brought a roar of approval from the Republican side of the chamber, for it referred to an issue that had been festering since World War II. Republicans had long charged that in his wartime agreements with Stalin, President Roosevelt had made unnecessary concessions to the Russians—amounting to betrayal of the Chinese, the Poles, and other peoples of the Soviet periphery. The 1952 Republican platform had contained a plank, sawed by Dulles, promising to "repudiate all commitments contained in secret understandings such as those of Yalta," in order to demonstrate that the United States "looks happily forward to the genuine independence of those captive peoples." Dulles now planned to exploit this theme as part of a psychological campaign to stimulate unrest behind the Iron Curtain and bring pressure on Moscow.[5]

During the next several days Eisenhower and Dulles worked out a draft resolution that did not mention Yalta or propose to repudiate anything except "interpretations and applications" of agreements which had been "perverted to bring about the subjugation of free peoples." In effect, this would declare Stalin, rather than Roosevelt, the Yalta villain. The Republican leaders, when this was unveiled to them, expressed disappointment at the failure to execute the letter of the Chicago platform; they wanted to denounce FDR. But Eisenhower and Dulles were reluctant to go further because the Democrats had already made it clear that they would not support anything disparaging Roosevelt. Eisenhower felt that if the resolution were to serve any purpose outside the United States, it had to have support from both parties. Furthermore, repudiation of wartime agreements was a game that, once started, the Russians might also play to the disadvantage of the United States. Despite the leaders' dissatisfaction, Eisenhower proposed the resolution on February 20 and defended it in his press conference.

The Republicans in the Senate, however, were more interested in partisan than psychological warfare. Taft proposed an amendment, which

[5] *Washington Post* (Feb. 3, 1953); Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (1956), p. 47.

a majority of the Foreign Relations Committee accepted, specifying that the resolution did not constitute a determination by Congress as to the "validity or invalidity" of these agreements. Since this was obviously intended to suggest that Roosevelt might have exceeded his authority in negotiating with the Russians, the Democratic Policy Committee voted to oppose it. Taft would not retreat, and to avoid a partisan fight, Eisenhower asked the Republican leaders to drop the whole thing. The resolution was never brought to a vote.[6]

The Bohlen Nomination

The argument over the "repudiation" resolution raised tempers and set the stage for an even sharper challenge to the administration by the Senate right wing. The next contest was over the confirmation of Charles E. Bohlen as Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Bohlen was one of the principal experts on Soviet affairs among Foreign Service officers of high rank. He had been present at most of the war and postwar conferences with the Russians, and had held several responsible posts in the State Department. Dulles and Eisenhower both knew him, and a committee of distinguished retired Foreign Service officers that Dulles had asked to advise him on the top diplomatic assignments endorsed a suggestion that he be sent to Moscow. Bohlen's name went to the Senate late in February, and he appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee on March 2.

The Republicans on the committee, suspicious of anyone who had been part of the Acheson regime, gave Bohlen a thorough going-over. They probed particularly into his role at the Yalta Conference, where he had been an interpreter and adviser on Roosevelt's staff. Bohlen was polite, but he firmly declined to agree that the Yalta agreements had been a sell-out, or that the American delegation had been significantly influenced by Alger Hiss. Several senators announced that they would oppose his confirmation, and the committee put off a vote for several days—an interval in which the death of Stalin seemed to increase the urgency of getting a man in the long vacant post at Moscow. Rumors of objections to Bohlen on loyalty or security grounds began to be heard. To quiet them, Dulles appeared before the committee on March 18 to say that he had personally reviewed the FBI report on Bohlen (he was

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50.

getting such reports on all appointees) and had found nothing to give concern. With that assurance, the committee voted unanimously to recommend confirmation.

The fight shifted to the Senate floor. On March 20, Senators McCarthy and Pat McCarran of Nevada said that Scott McLeod, the State Department security chief, had refused to clear Bohlen for the appointment, but that Dulles had overruled him. Dulles denied this, saying that McLeod had merely pointed to certain unfavorable information in the FBI report as he passed the matter to the Secretary for decision; it was not McLeod's function to "clear" or "not clear." Dulles had judged the information trivial and did not hesitate to approve the appointment.

McCarran charged that Dulles lied and demanded Senate access to the full FBI file. McCarthy said he knew what was in Bohlen's file and that calling him a security risk was "putting it too weak." Democratic Senator John McClellan of Arkansas helpfully suggested a confrontation of Dulles and McLeod before the Foreign Relations Committee. The row continued in the Senate for several days. While McLeod's role remained ambiguous, there were strong indications that he was leaking information to the right-wing Senators and to the press. McLeod also had a conference with General Persons, the White House legislative liaison chief, in what appeared an attempt to go over Dulles' head, although it was later explained that he had merely asked Persons' opinion, as a friend, whether he should resign. Dulles was on the verge of firing McLeod for insubordination but shrank from it because of the additional trouble it would create.

Senator Taft was not active in the early stages of the controversy. He had voted for confirmation in the Foreign Relations Committee, making clear that Bohlen was not the sort of man he personally approved, but that he felt Eisenhower and Dulles were entitled to make their own choices in the absence of compelling reasons to the contrary. But McCarthy's demands for a lie-detector test of Bohlen and an open confrontation of Dulles and McLeod brought Taft charging in to put down such mischief. He found it distasteful but necessary, in order to protect the integrity of the Republican administration, to deliver a rebuke to the right wing. To quiet the demands for disclosure of the FBI file on Bohlen, Taft arranged for himself and Senator Sparkman, the recent Democratic Vice Presidential nominee, to examine the summary of the material that had been used at the State Department. They reported that the derogatory information was mere rubbish, such as a statement by

a woman who had seen Bohlen once and knew by her sixth sense that he was unreliable. Coming from Taft, such a judgment was convincing to all but the extreme rightists.

Eisenhower, silent until that point, now made a press conference statement in support of Bohlen. However, although reported to be privately angry at McCarthy and his friends, he declined to question their motives. The next day, March 27, Bohlen was confirmed by a vote of 74-13, with 11 of the negative votes coming from the Republican side.

Thus Eisenhower won on the immediate issue. But having come to the administration's rescue and demonstrated its dependence on him, Taft's assertion at the White House that there must be "no more Bohlens" carried great weight. From then on, the administration was especially cautious about appointments that might offend the right wing. Dulles' failure to fire McLeod, and Eisenhower's publicly calm reaction to McCarthy's attacks, struck many observers as inadequate responses to a thinly veiled declaration of war on the administration.[7]

McCarthy and the Greek Ships

One crisis with McCarthy led immediately to another. A long-standing sore point of American foreign policy was that some nations ostensibly supporting the United Nations effort in Korea and receiving American aid had not forbidden their merchant ships to call in Red China's ports. Such trade had little military significance, but the State Department and Mutual Security Administration, under both Truman and Eisenhower, had been trying to dry it up by friendly persuasion without creating allied disharmony. However, it had not been stopped completely. The day after the vote on the Bohlen confirmation, McCarthy called a press conference to announce that he and his committee staff, in contrast to the "dismal failure" of the administration, had struck a major blow at Red China: he had negotiated an agreement with the Greek owners of some 242 ships to stop this trade.[8]

[7] The Bohlen controversy can be followed in the daily columns of such newspapers as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times,* throughout March, 1953. See also Beal, *op. cit.,* pp. 142-43; Donovan, *op. cit.,* pp. 87-89; William S. White, *The Taft Story* (1954), pp. 230-39; *Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen,* Hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 83 Cong. 1 sess. (1953). A concise secondary account is James N. Rosenau, *The Nomination of "Chip" Bohlen* (1958).

[8] *Washington Post* (Mar. 29, 1953). The owners were Greek nationals, mostly operating out of New York, with ships carrying Greek, Panamanian, Liberian, Canadian, and British flags.

The White House and the State Department had no immediate comment, but Mutual Security Administrator Harold Stassen promptly struck back, telling reporters that McCarthy's methods were "irregular" and his claims "phony." Called before McCarthy's committee, Stassen stuck to his guns, insisting that the Senator was "undermining" American foreign policy. He also enraged McCarthy by stoutly defending one of his assistants who was being grilled by McCarthy.[9]

However, the expected showdown between McCarthy and the administration did not materialize. Two days later, through the arrangements of Vice President Nixon, Dulles received McCarthy for a luncheon at the State Department.[10] The result was a joint communiqué in which Dulles thanked McCarthy for his help and agreed that his efforts had been in the national interest; McCarthy disclaimed any intent to interfere in matters under the jurisdiction of the Chief Executive and agreed to bring future information on this subject to the attention of the proper authorities.[11] Apparently satisfied with this outcome, Eisenhower in his next press conference declined to criticize McCarthy. Reminded of Stassen's statement, Eisenhower said he doubted that Stassen had really mean "undermining"; perhaps "infringing" was more like it.[12] Stassen loyally backed down, agreed that he had meant infringing rather than undermining, and professed to be happy with the outcome of the Dulles-McCarthy talk.[13]

In the succeeding weeks McCarthy tried to make an agreement with Greek shipowners in London similar to the one with the owners in New York and blamed Stassen for his inability to do so.[14] He also demanded that the administration bring further pressure on the British. Unsatisfied with the testimony of administration witnesses, he wrote a letter to Eisenhower asking for a personal statement of the administration's position. Such a statement could hardly fail to offend either the British or the Senate—or both. The Vice President came to the rescue

[9] *Ibid.* (Mar. 30, 31, 1953); *New York Times* (Mar. 30, 31, 1953).

[10] Earl Mazo, *Richard Nixon* (1959), p. 145. Mazo discusses at some length Nixon's role as intermediary between the administration and McCarthy in 1953 and 1954. ". . . Preserving party harmony became a near obsession with Nixon." p. 144.

[11] Text of the statement in *New York Times* (Apr. 2, 1953); Beal, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-49.

[12] *Washington Post* (Apr. 3, 1953).

[13] Observers confident that the administration would not tolerate McCarthy's conduct indefinitely quipped that Stassen had been guilty of "premature anti-McCarthyism." *New York Times* (Apr. 4, 5, 1953).

[14] *Ibid.* (Apr. 16, 1953).

and intercepted the letter.[15] The Senator turned his attention to other matters, but the price of peace with him seemed to be going up rapidly.

The Bricker Amendment

After the Greek ship controversy, the administration had to take up another difficult issue, this one involving conflict with a far more substantial body of conservative opinion than McCarthy represented. The issue was raised by Ohio Senator John W. Bricker's long-standing proposal for a constitutional amendment tightening congressional control over treaty-making and limiting the President's authority to make executive agreements with other nations. After the years of Republican agitation over the active diplomacy of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, and the charges that they had (or had intended to) sign away the liberties of the American people, the proposal had great appeal. Over sixty senators, of both political parties, had joined earlier in endorsing Bricker's proposal. Dulles himself, less than a year before, had warned the American Bar Association that treaties might "override the Constitution," or "take powers from the states and give them to the Federal government," or "cut across the rights given to the people by the . . . Bill of Rights."

Before inauguration Bricker had tried to get Eisenhower to commit himself to the proposal, but the President-elect had dodged. After January 20, Dulles studied it carefully and concluded that it would seriously tie the hands of the President. The cabinet discussed the idea of some sort of substitute that might placate conservatives without doing significant damage to presidential powers. Eisenhower and Dulles talked to Bricker in late March and got the impression that he would not insist on his amendment verbatim, thus giving hope of an acceptable compromise.[16]

Early in April, hearings before a subcommittee chaired by Bricker put the administration on the spot. Dulles paid compliments to the Senator for his "exertions to alert our nation to possible danger," and admitted that the problem was one that should be "kept under constant observation and study." While he thought that there was "no present

[15] *Ibid.* (May 26, 1953). According to Mazo, *op. cit.*, p. 146, the letter lay at the White House, officially "unreceived," for two days before Nixon persuaded McCarthy to retrieve it.

[16] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-34.

need for Constitutional change," he suggested a special commission to examine the question further.[17] Although Eisenhower had told the members of the cabinet to express their own convictions if invited to testify, Brownell and various others followed Dulles in opposing the amendment.

A clash with Bricker on a related issue several weeks later helped to harden Eisenhower's resistance. The administration had negotiated a treaty to define the legal status of American servicemen on duty in NATO countries. Bricker proposed a reservation and made a bitter personal attack on Bedell Smith and Herman Phleger when they testified in opposition to his position.[18] When it was pointed out to Eisenhower that the effect of the Bricker constitutional amendment would be to make it impossible for Congress to ratify a status of forces agreement—a type of international instrument with which he was familiar from his NATO service—he concluded more firmly than ever that Bricker must be defeated.[19]

Nevertheless, public support for Bricker was so strong, and so many people were publicly committed, that Eisenhower felt compelled to search for some sort of harmless substitute. Early in July, he said at a press conference that he was willing to support an amendment affirming that no treaty could contravene or supersede the Constitution. Later in the month, Senator Knowland offered a compromise he had worked out with administration leaders, but Bricker rejected it. The Senate leaders then agreed to hold the matter over to the next session, averting the danger for the time being.[20]

Agitation for the Bricker amendment continued until the issue came to a bitter showdown in 1954. A compromise put forward by Senator Walter George of Georgia, which the administration regarded as only slightly less damaging than the Bricker version, was defeated in the Senate by only one vote. Thus the stalling tactic succeeded.

The Tariff Rises Again

The tariff, which had figured in the 1913, 1921, and 1933 transitions, became an issue again in 1953, demonstrating a pattern of policy evolu-

[17] *New York Times* (Apr. 7, 1953).
[18] *Ibid.* (May 8, 1953).
[19] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-35.
[20] *New York Times* (July 23, 24, 1954); Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-38.

tion that was characteristic of the period: an early deadline established by the expiration of existing legislation; the Republican party divided; a series of administration actions suggesting insensitivity to the issue and uncertainty about what line to take; resolution of the issue postponed by the establishment of a commission; the commission failing to produce agreement but serving to blunt the congressional drive for a major policy change; and the administration eventually muddling through with a policy substantially preserving the status quo.

Back in 1934, Cordell Hull's labors for free trade had resulted in an act authorizing the President, for a specified period, to make agreements with other nations for the reciprocal reduction of tariffs. As successively extended and modified, it had by 1953 become a cornerstone of American tariff policy and a pivot for debate between protectionists and free-traders. The act was again scheduled to expire on June 21, 1953, thus guaranteeing the issue a place on the new administration's agenda.

The Truman administration had foreseen the expiration and taken steps to prepare for the inevitable argument about renewal. During the summer of 1952, Truman asked the Public Advisory Board[21] of the Mutual Security Agency to begin a thorough study of American trade policy. It was a more or less unspoken premise that the study would validate the need for an extension of the trade agreements act and other steps to increase foreign trade with the United States; the MSA, which had been striving to build up the economies of Europe and close the postwar "dollar gap," would hardly have sponsored it had other results been anticipated. Within that framework, however, there were efforts to make the study a bipartisan project, free from direct influence by the Truman administration. MSA Director Averell Harriman, who ordinarily chaired the board, stepped aside, and Daniel W. Bell, a widely respected political independent, was brought in as acting chairman and director of the study.[22] Bell's leadership, the nature of the board's membership, and the high quality staff that was recruited (mostly from

[21] This board, a distinguished bipartisan body of outside advisers, had been established by Congress as part of the effort to ensure wide acceptability and political neutrality of the Marshall Plan. Its members were nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. As of 1952 its members included such eminent figures as Allan B. Kline of the Farm Bureau Federation, James G. Patton of the National Farmers Union, Herschel Newsom of the National Grange, James B. Carey of the CIO, George Meany of the AFL, Eric Johnston of the Motion Picture Producers Association, and Jonathan Daniels, second-generation publisher and Democratic leader from North Carolina.

[22] Bell had climbed the government career ladder to become Undersecretary of the Treasury before becoming head of a Washington bank.

outside MSA) were expected to give the study's findings wide acceptability.

Early hopes of completing the study before the end of Truman's term had faded by November. The board then had to decide whether to abandon the study and go out with Truman or stay on the job, finish the report, and turn it in to Eisenhower. Signs of resurgence of historic Republican protectionism in congressional and other quarters indicated that the probable findings would not be pleasing to all of Eisenhower's supporters. However, the President-elect was perceived as an economic internationalist who, personally at least, would be receptive to the board's ideas. After Harold Stassen was designated to head MSA, Bell advised him of the probable tenor of the report and tried to get some guidance, but without success. Stassen showed no enthusiasm for the project, but he did not accept Bell's offer to abandon it. With the concurrence of the board's Republican members, Bell decided to finish the job.

After taking office, Stassen continued to appear cold toward the study, but he took no action to stop it. Late in February, the board completed a unanimous report recommending substantial liberalization of American trade policy. Eisenhower received it with words of appreciation on March 3, and the report was published the following day. It was well received by most academic economists and in circles inclined toward freer trade; protectionists immediately condemned it.[23]

Despite his supposed free-trade predilections, Eisenhower had been acting with caution on the trade issue. In his State of the Union message early in February, he had suggested that Congress "study and extend" the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. However, he had hinted willingness to make concessions to protariff interests by noting that extension "must not ignore legitimate safeguarding of domestic industries, agriculture and labor standards." There was, indeed, good reason for political caution. With the return of the Republicans to power, protectionists were in a stronger position than they had been for many years; they hoped to kill the reciprocity policy or, at a minimum, extract major concessions in exchange for a renewal. Their stronghold in the House of Representatives was Chairman Dan Reed's Ways and Means Committee.

[23] The story of the study's origin, progress, and reception by the Eisenhower administration has been told by one of the staff members. David S. Brown, *The Public Advisory Board and the Tariff Study*. Inter-University Case Program, Case #30 (1956).

Pre-Eisenhower presidential tactics in such a situation would have been to use the Bell report to generate support for overriding the protectionists and getting a clean extension of reciprocity. Eisenhower and his associates, however, regarded this legacy of Truman's as an embarrassment rather than an asset; instead of calling attention to its findings, they buried it. When asked about it at press conferences, they pretended the vaguest sort of knowledge of its existence and contents. Despite the fact that several prominent Republicans had signed the report and many outstanding Eisenhower supporters had greeted it enthusiastically, it was casually dismissed as just one more of Truman's works that might as well be forgotten.

By April, Eisenhower apparently had abandoned any idea of immediate liberalization of trade policy; he sought only to preserve the status quo until the Republicans could develop their own program. Rep. Richard M. Simpson of Pennsylvania, one of the protectionists' principal spokesmen in Congress, had introduced a bill for a one-year extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. However, his bill contained extra features that would raise tariff rates, impose import quotas on certain commodities, and make the findings of the Tariff Commission (normally highly sensitive to the interests of domestic producers) binding on, rather than advisory to, the President. Eisenhower renewed his request for a straight one-year extension, without the Simpson extras. He did, however, after a conference with Simpson and Dan Reed, make other concessions to the protectionists. He proposed that the trade problem be studied during the year of extension by a joint legislative-executive commission.[24] He also nominated a man put forward by the protectionists to be a member of the Tariff Commission. Shortly afterward he nominated an executive from the lead industry, who was reported to have drafted a section of the Simpson bill that would have the effect of raising the tariff on lead, to be Assistant Secretary of Interior for mines and minerals.[25]

Early in May, when hearings finally began on Simpson's bill, the protectionists mobilized strong support for its restrictive features. Administration leaders asked for the reciprocal trade extension and the study commission but nothing else. They did, however, offer other concessions. Secretary Humphrey promised a crack-down on Uruguayan

[24] *New York Times* (Apr. 3, 1953).
[25] *Ibid.* (Apr. 6, 1953); *Washington Post* (Apr. 8, 1953).

wool, which was entering cheaply with the aid of what amounted to a subsidy by that country's government. Secretary Dulles assured the committee that speeches by Undersecretary Bedell Smith and other high-ranking members of his department calling for trade liberalization did not necessarily represent the position of the administration; he also promised that if authority to make reciprocal agreements were extended, the administration would make no significant use of it pending the findings of the study commission. He admitted having heard of the Bell report but dismissed it as irrelevant.[26]

After the hearings closed, the White House legislative liaison staff went to work on Simpson and eventually reached a compromise. Simpson agreed to transfer most of his restrictive, tariff-raising features to a separate bill. The administration agreed to accept, along with reciprocity extension, a provision expanding the Tariff Commission from a bipartisan body of three Democrats and three Republicans to a seven-man group on which the Republicans would have a majority. The composition of the proposed study commission also was changed to give the legislative appointees a majority.[27] On this basis, the House passed the bill. After extended debate, the Senate knocked out the provision to "pack" the commission and passed the bill.[28]

As luck would have it, the chairman of the conference committee was Representative Dan Reed, who at the same time was embroiled in the fight with the administration and the House leadership over extending the excess profits tax. For a full month, Reed sat on the trade bill. The deadlock was not broken until the closing days of the session, when Eisenhower nominated another high-tariff man to the Tariff Commission, making a 3-3 balance in that agency. Reed then convened the conference committee, and the House members receded on the demand to expand the commission's membership. The bill passed, giving the President authority—which he was virtually committed not to use—until the following June.[29]

The Commission on Foreign Economic Policy was set up shortly thereafter, a heterogeneous group of congressmen, executive officials,

[26] *New York Times* (May 5, 1953); *Washington Post* (May 5, 1953). Dulles, commented an editorial in the latter journal, "sounded like a lawyer not altogether in sympathy with his client."

[27] *New York Times* (June 2, 1953).

[28] *Washington Post* (July 3, 1953). The old law had by now expired, but the agreements made under its authority remained in effect.

[29] *New York Times* (Aug. 4, 1953).

and outside appointees. Clarence B. Randall, a steel company executive, was given the job of reconciling the irreconcilable. During the fall of 1953, the Randall commission held hearings and a staff plowed through the now-familiar facts one more time, while both protectionists and free-traders beat the propaganda drums and mobilized new "action groups." In January 1954, the commission proposed a trade liberalization program, which did not go nearly so far as the Bell recommendations a year earlier. It recommended a new extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act for at least three years, with the President authorized to negotiate tariff reductions of not more than 5 per cent in each year. Even so, the report was sprinkled with individual dissents; congressmen Reed and Simpson, who had been on the commission, objected to virtually everything.[30] Eisenhower then formally asked Congress for a three-year extension of the trade agreements act. After a battle along lines similar to those of the year before, he squeezed through with another one-year extension. A three-year extension was enacted in 1955 when the Democrats returned to power in Congress.

To emphasize Eisenhower's difficulties with his first Congress, it should be noted that while the 1953 reciprocal trade extension bill was barely squeaking through—with Democratic assistance—the conservatives in his own party were taking the lead in cutting the mutual security budget far more deeply than Eisenhower intended. Small wonder that the President allowed himself to dream of party realignment!

THE EISENHOWER PEACE

But it was not all frustration that first spring. His difficulties with Congress notwithstanding, Eisenhower achieved major successes in the international sphere. Situations long stalemated were becoming ripe for solutions, his enormous prestige gave him a strong political base from which to negotiate, and fortuitous events abroad helped matters along. The processes were not always tidy, and gains in some areas were at the expense of partially offsetting losses elsewhere. Nevertheless, the first half year of the new administration brought a visible relaxation of

[30] An early draft of the report, it was reported on good authority, had gone considerably further in its recommendations for trade liberalization, but Randall had softened it in an effort to win the congressional members, particularly the influential Senator Millikin of Colorado. In the end, Millikin declined to go along with the key recommendations anyway. *New York Times* (Jan. 24, 1954).

tensions in Europe and—most important of all—the end of the war in Korea.

Seizing an Opening

The first break was something for which the new administration could not claim credit. On March 5, only six weeks after Eisenhower took office, the Soviet Union announced the death of Premier Joseph Stalin. What Soviet policy changes would follow from this event could only be speculated about, but it raised hopes of a shift toward more reasonable positions. Perhaps the famous Eisenhower luck was running again.

American strategists had often discussed but never agreed on what to do in this contingency, and for the time being there was no distinct policy response. However, the time seemed propitious for a major attempt to improve relations between the free world and the communist bloc. Eisenhower set his writer, Emmett Hughes, and his personal adviser on cold war strategy, C. D. Jackson, to work on a major foreign policy speech. The job took several weeks, complicated by differences of viewpoint and approach among the President's advisers.[31] But eventually the speech was drafted, reviewed by the cabinet, and completed. A meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington on April 16 provided an occasion likely to produce maximum publicity. Calling on the new Soviet leaders to seize "a precious opportunity . . . to help turn the tide of history," Eisenhower commented on most of the world's trouble spots in a manner calculated to encourage flexibility on the part of the communists. He reiterated the American desire for an honorable armistice in Korea, to be followed by political discussions seeking a united Korea and free elections. He asked for an end to communist aggression in Indo-China, Malaya, and elsewhere in Asia. With respect to Europe, Eisenhower called for new efforts to agree on an Austrian peace treaty and a basis for a free, united Germany. He jabbed at Soviet-satellite relations with a plea for free choice of governments for all people. Limitation of armaments, including international control of atomic energy with appropriate safeguards enforced by the United Nations, also was mentioned. Eisenhower pro-

[31] See Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "President Seizes Peace Offensive," *Washington Post* (Apr. 20, 1953); Drew Pearson, "Ike Talked while Dulles Was Away," *Ibid.* (Apr. 20, 1953).

posed that the savings achieved by disarmament go to an international fund to be used to wage "a new kind of war" against poverty and need everywhere in the world.[32]

Delivered with great earnestness, the speech had a warm reception. This, most observers felt, was the old Eisenhower—the real Eisenhower —again expressing the free world's hopes for unity and peace. By Hagerty's arrangements, in the next few days Vice President Nixon and five cabinet members made speeches designed to call attention to the President's proposals. Eisenhower's desire for peace was widely advertised to the world.[33]

Problems of Relaxation

But the response to the speech brought out an ambivalence in American policy. During the next few weeks the Soviets hinted at willingness to negotiate, creating a climate of optimism. This was, in one sense, what the speech had been intended to produce. However, it added to the difficulty of the State Department's standing job of rallying the members of the western alliance in the common cause. To the Europeans, greater defense efforts and sacrifices of their sovereignty now seemed less urgent. At a NATO meeting later in April there was a decision to stretch out the defense build-up. Germany ratified the European Defense Community treaty in May, but this seemed almost to decrease its acceptability in France, where no progress was made in bringing it toward ratification.

About this time Prime Minister Churchill complicated matters further by proposing a meeting of the heads of governments "at the summit" with the Russians. Having started the talk about negotiated settlements, the United States could not turn down the idea abruptly, but the State Department felt that an early meeting of this character would be premature until Soviet deeds gave more hope for a successful outcome. On the domestic political front the "tough" anticommunists were skeptical of what could be accomplished by negotiation and seized on the signs of "softness" in Europe to urge neo-isolationist and Asia-first positions.

[32] *New York Times* (Apr. 17, 1953).

[33] Walter Lippmann, for example, thought that the significance of the speech lay in Eisenhower's emphasis on negotiation; perhaps this was the end of "unconditional surrender" thinking. Lippmann pointed out, however, that this course was long and difficult, requiring rethinking and skillful preparations that the administration was hardly in a position to make, since the State Department was "for all the practical purposes of grand strategy and statesmanship paralyzed with fear and uncertainty." Walter Lippmann, "The President's Speech," *Washington Post* (Apr. 20, 1953).

Trying to keep everyone satisfied, Eisenhower and Dulles tacked back and forth in their public statements, not always in unison.[34]

Peace in Korea

During these preliminaries in Europe, the main diplomatic front was Asia, where Eisenhower and Dulles inched painfully toward a Korean armistice. They had decided that if it could be concluded on honorable terms, they would sign an agreement reflecting the military stalemate along approximately the pre-1950 dividing line between North and South Korea. They suspected, however, that Red China would continue to stall until the alternatives to signing appeared definitely costly. The problem was to build up pressure on China to accept an armistice without creating a situation in which China felt required to call the bluff (since the latter would pose the uncomfortable alternatives of backing down or vastly expanding the military effort against China, with all the cost and risk of World War III that such a course would entail).

Furthermore, the delicate job of applying just enough pressure had to be done under a political and diplomatic crossfire. On the one side, there were powerful political forces in the United States loudly demanding an end to "coddling" Red China and the use of as much force as might be necessary. Not only such extremists as Senators McCarthy and Jenner, but Taft and Knowland as well, took this point of view. On the other side, America's European allies, most of them committed to localized anticommunist campaigns of their own elsewhere in Asia, were nervous about American stands that might upset the negotiations or lead to general war in Asia.

The administration's first move after inauguration was the announcement in Eisenhower's State of the Union address that the Seventh Fleet would no longer protect the China coast from Chiang Kai-shek. What effect this psychological stroke had is uncertain; it soon became clear that despite much talk of "unleashing" or "taking the wraps off" Chiang, he was not going to do anything without substantial American help. However, the announcement at least kept Red China reminded of the possibility of action on its flank. It was followed by a series of military steps which could be interpreted as preparations for a renewed

[34] Brookings Institution, *Major Problems of United States Foreign Policy, 1954*, pp. 14-15, 20-21, 217-19.

allied offensive in Korea. Weapons, supplies, and man power were poured in; the program of training and equipping South Korean divisions was stepped up; Air Force fighter units in Korea were given improved jets; and heavy bomber units ostensibly possessing atomic bombs were moved up to Okinawa. The administration did not endorse but neither did it reject completely the numerous suggestions that atomic bombs be used, that Manchuria be bombed, or that the China coast be blockaded, unless the communists quickly came to terms.

For reasons unknown, but presumably following in some way from the death of Stalin and these American policy ventures, the Chinese reopened armistice negotiations late in March. Exchange of sick and wounded prisoners was agreed on and begun in April. The armistice itself, however, remained snagged on the question of exchange of prisoners, the United States insisting that no prisoner should be repatriated unless he wanted to be.

Late in May, the administration made a new effort to get a decision. Secretary Dulles, visiting in India, told Prime Minister Nehru that the United States had decided to extend its bombing into Manchuria if the stalemate were not broken soon. Since Nehru had been playing a middleman role, this warning was expected to reach Peiping in short order. On May 25 the allied negotiators made what they said was a final offer, which was backed up by a strong public statement from Eisenhower the following day. Favorable communist response gave rise to optimism, which increased through early June.

Meanwhile Eisenhower did his best to keep the anti-Red China group in the United States from rocking the boat. Just after the May 25 offer was submitted, Senator Taft made an important speech asserting that if this effort failed, "we might as well abandon any idea of working with the United Nations in the East and reserve to ourselves a completely free hand."[35] As diplomatically as he could, Eisenhower made a press conference statement rejecting what he called the "go it alone" idea.

During May and June, the administration also had long negotiations with Republican Senate leaders who were determined to see to it that the terms of a truce did not in effect permit China to "shoot her way into the United Nations." To a bill appropriating the regular United

[35] This was to be Taft's last major speech. The text was read by one of his sons, since Taft himself was already in a hospital.

States contribution to the United Nations, a rider had been added that would cancel the funds if Red China should be admitted. While Eisenhower had no immediate intention of agreeing to the entry, he was reluctant to have the United States giving what amounted to an ultimatum to the United Nations, or to have the issue foreclosed to future consideration in the context of a general settlement in the Far East. He eventually persuaded the legislators to be satisfied with a resolution expressing the "sense of Congress" on the subject, without tying it to the United Nations funds.[36]

There also was last-minute trouble with the immediate beneficiaries of the allied effort in Korea—President Syngman Rhee and his Republic of Korea government. Rhee was bitterly opposed to ending the war on a basis likely to preserve the territorial division of the Korean peninsula. He sought assurances from Eisenhower that the United States would reopen the war and try to unify Korea by force if the international political conference envisaged in the proposed armistice did not achieve this result. Instead, Eisenhower offered support for unification by peaceful means, a pact guaranteeing the security of the Republic of Korea, and military and economic aid. Early in June, with Rhee still unreconciled, the United Nations and communist negotiators reached an agreement that seemed to settle the prisoner issue; only minor matters remained to impede the armistice.

Ten days later, Rhee made a desperate effort to block the truce by releasing 27,000 prisoners of war who were alleged to be unwilling to be returned to the communist regime in North Korea. The Chinese and North Koreans, of course, accused the entire United Nations group of bad faith, and it appeared for a while that the armistice was off. There was no practical way to recover the prisoners, but Eisenhower strongly repudiated Rhee's action. Despite Rhee's obvious hopes, the Chinese continued the negotiations.

Assistant Secretary of State Robertson hurried to Korea for several days of intensive talks with Rhee, again assuring him that powerful force would be brought to his aid if the war were reopened from the North. Rhee reluctantly agreed not to sabotage the truce, and the long-awaited armistice was signed on July 26.

In the United States, those of the political right still felt that it was peace without honor, and many friends of the Truman administration

[36] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-37.

muttered that Eisenhower had accepted a "soft" settlement for which the Republicans would have excoriated Truman and Acheson. Nevertheless, the overwhelming sentiment of the American public was grateful relief. Eisenhower had kept his pledge and brought peace. The remainder of the free world also accepted the Korean armistice with pleasure. The political conference that assembled at Geneva pursuant to the armistice agreement got nowhere and Korea remained divided, much to Syngman Rhee's dissatisfaction. The problem of communist expansion in Asia obviously was not solved, but the United States had at least demonstrated its willingness to fight in clear-cut cases of aggression, frustrated one aggressor, and upheld the principle of collective security.

FOREIGN POLICY AND EXECUTION: ORDER AND CHAOS

During the early part of 1953, as the Eisenhower administration fenced with Congress and maneuvered toward peace in Korea, it was simultaneously engaged in a reconsideration of the government's basic foreign and security policies and the machinery for their formulation and execution. For the President personally, this was the area of prime concern and the one in which he was prepared to proceed with the most confidence based on his own experience. The priority was obviously appropriate, for the highest objectives of state—international peace and security—were directly involved, and the possibility of achieving many of the Republican economic goals depended on the outcome.

In this process there were sharp contrasts. A review of policies and procedures at the highest levels, in which Eisenhower himself participated, was conducted in a manner reflecting the new President's devotion to thorough staff work and orderly decision making. But at the next level down, the adjustments in the organizations for the execution of foreign policy were disorderly in the extreme. The President's reluctance to challenge Congress, McCarthy's aggressive tactics, John Foster Dulles' indifference to administrative considerations, and certain efforts at partisan manipulation of the bureaucracy, combined to complicate matters and severely cripple the State Department and the agencies for foreign information and foreign aid.

At the NSC Level

As indicated in Chapter 32, a review of top security policy was set in motion even before inauguration, with the conversations on the *Helena* and Robert Cutler's mission to the NSC. The process was shrouded in secrecy at the time, and even now only fragments of information are available, but from all indications there were weighty discussions in and around NSC for the next several months. In addition to considering such current matters as the death of Stalin, the future of the European Defense Community, and the revision of Truman's defense and foreign affairs budget, the administration's leaders dug into the policies and recommendations inherited from Truman, reconsidered basic strategy toward the communist world, and discussed formulas for maintaining both military security and national solvency over the long run.

In one of his campaign speeches, Eisenhower had strongly attacked the NSC for failing to do an adequate job of long-range policy planning and promised to "transform this agency from shadow to substance." One of his suggestions at the time had been to add to the NSC's busy cabinet officer members several distinguished elder statesmen who would have no other responsibility than to bring fresh viewpoints into the high councils. This idea was never carried out to the extent of officially expanding the membership of NSC. However, Eisenhower established a practice early in his administration of using outside persons as special consultants or on *ad hoc* committees and study groups on security problems.

In May, according to *Fortune's* historian, special task forces of civilian and military officers and outside consultants were asked to work out and present to the NSC alternative proposals for the "containment" doctrine that had been the foundation of Truman's anti-Soviet policy. Among the outsiders were General James Doolittle and the original formulator of containment, George F. Kennan. The result, after several weeks of discussion, was a confirmation of the essentials of containment, with several modifications such as pushing for new military pacts in such "soft" regions as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The NSC rejected, it is said, a proposal for a sharp step-up in political and economic pressure against the Soviet world.[37] This decision, plus

[37] See Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," *Fortune* (March 1956), p. 232.

the ending of the Korean war, cleared the way for a reconsideration of military policy, which will be described later in this chapter.

Simultaneously with the substantive review of NSC business, Eisenhower sought improvements in the machinery for reaching decisions. He presided at all the NSC meetings and took an active part in the discussions. Care was taken to bring the Vice President into the council's deliberations, and the active participation of Treasury Secretary Humphrey kept the cost of security programs in the forefront of considerations. Eisenhower's special assistant, Cutler, worked diligently to strengthen the links between the President and NSC itself, the interdepartmental planning board that shaped matters for final NSC decision, and the NSC secretariat (over which James Lay continued to preside). Under Cutler's supervision, staff was somewhat expanded, and the entire NSC operation was brought to a higher level of order and formality.[38]

Adjustments also were made in the NSC's appendages. The Psychological Strategy Board, an interdepartmental group that had been languishing for some time, was put under careful scrutiny and abolished in September 1953. This was in accordance with the advice of a special advisory committee, which emphasized that "psychological warfare" was involved in most foreign policy making but could not profitably be discussed as a separate subject.[39] Put in the place of the Psychological Strategy Board was a new Operations Coordinating Board, chaired by the Under Secretary of State and consisting of the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the top officials of the intelligence, foreign information, and foreign aid agencies. The OCB was to be a "follow-up" agency to ascertain that policies laid down by the NSC were being carried out in a coordinated fashion.[40] The Planning Board, the NSC,

[38] For early reports on the NSC's renovation, see White House press release of Mar. 23, 1953, and *New York Times* (Mar. 24, May 4, 1953). The following spring, apparently after Cutler thought he had matters in good enough shape to permit some publicity, there was a mild rash of newspaper and magazine articles. For example, "The President's General Management for U.S.," *Newsweek* (Feb. 8, 1954), pp. 29-30; Cabell Phillips, "The Super-Cabinet for Our Security," *New York Times Magazine* (Apr. 4, 1954), pp. 14-15, 60-62. *Cf.* a peevish article about the NSC's "downright neurotic obsession with secrecy for its own sake," by Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "What Is a Secret," *Washington Post* (Apr. 12, 1954).

[39] This was the President's Committee on International Information Activities, better known as the "two-Jackson committee." The chairman was William H. Jackson, a businessman and former CIA official; perhaps the most active member was C. D. Jackson, the President's special assistant for cold war planning—who also served as chairman of the Psychological Strategy Board in its closing months.

[40] White House press release, Sept. 3, 1953. *New York Times* (Sept. 4, 13, 1953).

and the OCB constituted an architectonic system for policy formulation, decision, and execution of which the administration was extremely proud.

Information, Investigation, Reorganization

Two levels down from the National Security Council was a horrible example of what political turnover could do to a government agency—the International Information Administration. The IIA was responsible for upholding the American viewpoint in the "battle for men's minds" all over the world. Its activities included the Voice of America radio service, a far-flung network of libraries and information centers, a large publications program, and other cultural exchange activities. The agency's antecedents went back to the World War II Office of War Information. Frequently reorganized, it was now an operating subsidiary of the State Department. The agency had always been unpopular in Congress, and had to battle constantly for funds, even though many distinguished Americans, including Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, had frequently spoken of the need for a stepped-up information program, a "Marshall Plan of ideas," to carry America's message to the world.

As the Eisenhower administration took over, the program was under investigation by both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senator McCarthy's Committee on Government Operations. Despite the fact that its holdover head, Dr. Wilson H. Compton, was a Republican, the agency was having rough going, particularly with McCarthy. His evidence consisted mostly of overstated charges, innuendo, and vague tales told by discontented employees. Among the artists, writers, and emigré intellectuals with which the information agency was heavily staffed, the currents of internal conflict ran unusually deep. But McCarthy professed to find shocking mismanagement and sympathy to communism. This strengthened the position of Republican conservatives like House Appropriations Chairman John Taber, who was determined to deny the agency funds and close it up altogether if he could.

The investigation was a typical McCarthy hit-and-run affair, too complicated to trace in detail, but the major point of conflict was the extent to which writings of persons known or charged to be communists or communist sympathizers could be used for propaganda purposes and

stocked by American libraries overseas. Following an earlier argument on this point, a distinguished advisory committee of university presidents, librarians, publishers, and others whose Americanism was above reproach had recommended in 1952 that the use of a book should depend on its contents and the specific situation, not the reputation of its author. In a January 1953 memorandum to his policy staff, Compton suggested caution in the use of works by controversial persons but noted that there were certain circumstances in which the books of Soviet-endorsed authors, for example, might be used to advantage because of their "special credibility among selected key audiences." An IIA general policy directive expressing this viewpoint, if not these particular words, was put out on February 3.[41]

This was seized on by McCarthy as a sign that the agency was circulating communist propaganda. The resignation of Dr. Compton, which had been submitted to the new administration, was abruptly accepted on February 18 (according to reports, he was summoned from a luncheon table at a downtown hotel to be told by telephone that he was out). The next day there was a new policy directive: "In order to avoid all misunderstanding, no material by any controversial persons, Communists, fellow travellers, etc., will be used under any circumstances by any IIA media." On February 20 and 21, Under Secretaries of State Bedell Smith and Don Lourie appeared before the McCarthy committee to promise cooperation in the investigation and to guarantee that no reprisals would be permitted against IIA employees who gave the committee information that might displease their bosses.[42] As if to demonstrate their good faith, they promptly announced the suspension of Alfred H. Morton, the head of the Voice of America. His offense had been to say in an internal memorandum that until he received clarification, he would not follow the February 19 directive literally, since to do so would stop the standard propaganda practice of quoting Lenin and Stalin against themselves and each other.[43] Morton was reinstated with a reprimand the following day but resigned shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile a new head of IIA had been designated. He was Robert L. Johnson, president of Temple University, the man who had sponsored the survey of reorganization problems before inauguration. There were

[41] Washington *Sunday Star* (Feb. 22, 1953); *New York Times* (Mar. 14, 1953).
[42] *Ibid.* (Feb. 21, 1953); Washington *Sunday Star* (Feb. 22, 1953).
[43] *Washington Post* (Feb. 25, 1953).

indications that as soon as Johnson had straightened out the situation, the program would be taken out of the State Department and established as an independent agency, taking its instructions directly from the President or the National Security Council. This move had been recently recommended by the United States Advisory Committee on Information,[44] and Johnson was known to favor it. Johnson was offered the job about February 18, accepted it on February 24, and was sworn in on March 3.

Johnson had little prior knowledge of the situation inside the information agency and was prepared to cooperate with the investigators while he learned the facts and cleaned house to suit himself.[45] He was encouraged along this line by Dulles, Lourie, Assistant Secretary Carl McCardle (his principal channel to Dulles), and by Scott McLeod, the State Department security officer, who also had jurisdiction in IIA.[46] While he found no evidence of subversion, he acted on the basis of information supplied by McLeod to let out a half-dozen employees on other security grounds, and stood aside as Senator McCarthy raked various IIA employees over the coals. Several IIA executives of high rank and repute were allowed to resign. Johnson also canceled contracts for the construction of two controversial high-power radio transmitters, which McCarthy had charged were mislocated through communist sabotage. Cooperating with the Budget Bureau and the economizers on the Hill, he canceled contracts with five private short-wave radio stations that had broadcast Voice of America material, and let out several hundred employees through reduction in force procedure.

Meanwhile there was mounting criticism and evidence of the unworkability of the February 19 directive, which had banned the works of "controversial persons, . . . fellow travellers, etc." along with the

[44] A group headed by Mark A. May of Yale University and including such eminently sound individuals as the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor,* the chairman of the board of General Electric, and the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post.*

[45] Martin Merson, "My Education in Government," *The Reporter* (Oct. 7, 1954), pp. 15-27. Merson was a Pennsylvania businessman who had been associated with Johnson on the Temple Survey and served as his personal assistant at IIA. Merson also described their adventures in a book, *The Private Diary of a Public Servant* (1955), a choice example of the literature of disillusionment.

[46] According to Merson, Dulles advised Johnson, for the sake of congressional relations, to find a place for O. K. Armstrong, a square-peg Republican ex-congressman who had set his eye on a job in IIA. McLeod advised him that it would be strategic to appoint a certain IIA employee to a job as his administrative assistant, since she had been supplying information to McCarthy. Johnson managed to avoid taking both pieces of advice. The lady turned up a little later as McLeod's assistant. Merson, *Private Diary,* pp. 20-26.

writings of communists. Who was to decide which authors were controversial? And what was an "etc."? Johnson pressed for clarification and on March 18 received from McCardle a new directive that was only a slight improvement over its predecessor. In certain circumstances, "communist material" could be used to "expose communist propaganda." However, books by communists or those who followed the party line and participated in front organizations were banned from the libraries, along with other works "detrimental to U. S. objectives." A list of forbidden authors was promised. The State Department security office was soon swamped with a flood of requests for "clearance" of writers, artists, and composers whose works the IIA wanted to use. The flow of new materials to the field dried up to a trickle. The overseas missions protested that the standards were unworkable and that they could not get guidance.[47] As the "blacklists" began to come through from the security officers, they contained the names of many eminent persons about whom no questions had previously been raised. McCarthy had lists of his own, a virtual "who's who" of American liberalism and the world of arts and letters. In response to the blacklists, or simply playing it safe, overseas librarians began to purge the shelves.

Johnson soon found that cooperating with the investigators was an exhausting game. For several weeks after his arrival in Washington, he was unable to see McCarthy, who dealt with IIA through his young aides, Roy M. Cohn and G. David Schine. They complained that IIA economy firings were breaking up their "underground" in the agency and badgered Johnson with advice about who to hire and fire. Late in April, according to Merson, Johnson asked C. D. Jackson to find out if the President would back him in a stand against such high-handed tactics. The reply was that no one would dream of approaching the President on this subject, in view of his passion about not offending Congress.[48] After a series of broken dates, preparatory discussions by aides, and other delicate negotiations, Johnson and his assistant were able (with the assistance of columnist George Sokolsky) to see McCarthy. The meeting led to more promises of cooperation but no relief from the attentions of Cohn and Schine.

By this time the President's government organization committee had approved Johnson's proposal to take the information program out of the State Department—Dulles was happy to be rid of it anyway. But when

[47] *Washington Post* (Apr. 24, 25, 1953).
[48] Merson, *Private Diary*, p. 73.

several senators objected to the transfer of the exchange of persons portion of the program, the administration gave way on that point, Sherman Adams frankly overruling Johnson's objections on the ground of expediency.[49]

Meanwhile, compliance with the State Department's March 18 directive aroused a furore over "book-burning" in the overseas libraries, which attracted world-wide attention through May and June. The IIA was caught between common sense and McCarthyism, and every attempt to clarify the policy led to new complaints and dissatisfaction on one side or the other. Eisenhower entered the discussion with some scornful remarks about "book-burners" interjected in a speech at Dartmouth College on June 14. In later press conferences, however, adhering to his policy of avoiding difficulty with Congress, he qualified his remarks so as to take most of the sting out of the implied rebuke to McCarthy.[50] Secretary Dulles, when pressed for a statement, made an equivocal response and passed the buck to Johnson. Johnson and Martin Merson assembled a new advisory committee, which spanned the liberal-conservative spectrum, and worked frantically to draft a new policy on books. On July 1, the President confused the situation—contradicting a recent statement by Johnson and upsetting the eleventh draft of a clarifying order—by remarking in his press conference that he did not see why the detective stories of Dashiell Hammett should be banned, even if that author had recently invoked the Fifth Amendment.[51]

During the month of July matters moved swiftly. On the 3rd, Johnson asked the President to relieve him of his post within thirty days, saying that the groundwork for a renovated, independent, information agency now had been laid and that his doctors had ordered him to get a rest. Eisenhower responded on the 6th with a letter of appreciation and regret, although it was understood that he had been dissatisfied with Johnson and was glad to have the resignation.[52]

Two days later the new book policy statement was ready, and Johnson released it over his own signature, although with Dulles' lukewarm

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79. The reorganization (Plan 8) was announced on June 1, to be effective sixty days later.

[50] *Washington Post* (June 15, 18, 1953).

[51] *New York Times* (July 2, 1953).

[52] *Ibid.* (July 7, 1953). Merson, *Private Diary*, p. 73, suggests that White House aide C. D. Jackson, on whom Eisenhower presumably depended for advice in this field, knifed Johnson.

approval. Eisenhower was absolved of responsibility for its contents. The directive strongly affirmed the original policy that the content of a book and the specific situation should govern its use, not the author. The purpose of the information program was to advance democracy, not communism, but this did not mean that all works critical of American policies and institutions must necessarily be excluded. In no case should books be burned, " a wicked symbolic act." In some cases the special nature of the overseas libraries might indicate the use of works by communists "if such authors may have written something which affirmatively served the ends of democracy."[53]

McCarthy, whose public statements about Johnson had until then been approving (if patronizing), hotly attacked what he called a "completely ridiculous" directive. Johnson, on his way out and no longer feeling any need to be cooperative, issued a statement that took back nothing.[54] In the next few days Johnson made other statements defending the new policy and warning against impairment of effective anticommunist programs by "unsupported charges that they are soft on communism."[55] A few days later, newspapers quoted Karl Baarslaag, McCarthy's newly appointed "research director," as saying that in a survey of the overseas libraries he had found no anti-Soviet publications. In a press statement and open letter to McCarthy, Johnson challenged this statement.

McCarthy now wheeled up another weapon. Calling public attention to the fact that he was a member of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee handling the information agency's budget, he wrote an open letter to Johnson on July 20: "Doctor, if you had deliberately set out to sabotage any possibility of getting adequate funds to run a good information program, you could not have done a better job in that sabotage than you have."[56] Johnson was eager to do battle in the open but was put under wraps by the White House. Sherman Adams told him to make no more public statements and to stay away from the Senate committee hearings on the information appropriation.[57] Bedell Smith appeared at the hearing on July 24 and made a token defense of the program. The agency received an appropriation of $75 million,

[53] *New York Times* (July 8, 1953); Merson, in *The Reporter*, p. 25.
[54] *New York Times* (July 10, 1953).
[55] *Ibid.* (July 16, 1953).
[56] *Washington Post* (July 21, 1953).
[57] This was apparently at the suggestion of Senator Karl F. Mundt and Vice President Nixon, who told Adams that they would undertake to pacify McCarthy and get an adequate appropriation if Johnson were shut up. Merson, in *The Reporter*, p. 26.

as compared to $96 million the year before; and of the new appropriation about $4 million was to be spent in moving the headquarters of the Voice of America operation from New York to Washington, where it would presumably be under better control.

The reorganization plan establishing the United State Information Agency, separate but receiving "top policy guidance" from the State Department, became effective on July 30. That same day Eisenhower named Theodore C. Streibert, a former radio network executive, to be Johnson's successor. To stay within the new budget, Streibert had to cut back the program and reduce by about one fourth the agency's personnel strength of 8,200. McCarthy soon turned his attentions elsewhere, and Streibert labored to rebuild the agency's internal morale and outside support. In October 1953, Eisenhower moved to put his prestige behind the agency by publicizing a report from Streibert on the steps taken to rebuild the program, and by a new "statement of mission" approved by the NSC.[58] In February 1954, the United States Advisory Commission on Information made a public report giving its general support and pleading for a relief from further congressional investigations.[59] By the end of that year, stability had returned and the agency had to make a high-pressure recruiting campaign to fill its many vacant positions.[60]

Foreign Assistance Programs

In the autumn of 1953, about the time the information agency began to settle down after the McCarthy investigation, a new uproar broke out in a closely related field—the foreign aid program. A reorganization and drastic personnel cut, announced after several months of gradually increasing tension, produced shock and confusion that severely hampered foreign assistance efforts well into 1954.

Harold Stassen, succeeding Averell Harriman, inherited a job that was politically difficult and administratively almost impossible as then established. Although the Eisenhower administration clearly had little choice but to continue it, foreign assistance had never been popular with Congress or with much of the American public. It had been a major effort each year for the Truman administration to get the necessary appropriations, and now a substantial body of Republican opinion was in

[58] *New York Times* (Oct. 29, 1953).
[59] *Washington Post* (Feb. 4, 1954).
[60] *New York Times* (Nov. 2, 1954).

favor of cutting down drastically on foreign aid expenditures, or perhaps eliminating them altogether. As head of the Mutual Security Agency (successor to the old Marshall Plan organization), Stassen was directly responsible for economic aid to Europe and certain countries in Asia. He also "wore another hat" as Director for Mutual Security in the Executive Office of the President. In this capacity he was responsible for coordinating foreign assistance functions administered by all departments. The principal ones outside of his own agency were the program of supplying military equipment and training to various allied nations, handled by the Department of Defense, and the so-called "Point Four" program of technical aid for economic development, carried on by the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA), an operating arm of the State Department. This anomalous situation, by which an officer who was not a department head was supposed to coordinate the secretaries of State and Defense, did not really satisfy anyone, but there was no agreement on how to straighten it out. One view was that all these functions were so vital to foreign policy that they must be brought under the close supervision of the Secretary of State. Others thought that foreign assistance could not be really efficient unless all such activities were pulled together somewhere outside the unsympathetic environment of the Department of State. John Foster Dulles' aversion to burdening himself and the department with operating responsibilities inclined the Eisenhower administration to the latter view.

Stassen's most immediate problem was to review the foreign aid program in terms of Republican standards of economy. A few days after inauguration, he went with Dulles for a quick first-hand look at the situation in Europe. Met on his return by Joseph Dodge's call for a review of the Truman budget, he issued an immediate stop-order on new project commitments. On February 9, he announced that fifty-five prominent businessmen, made up into eleven separate teams, would inspect the American aid missions abroad, evaluate their activities, and advise him on how the program could be made more effective. The general report of this group, submitted six weeks later, recommended stronger medicine than the administration was prepared to take. The United States was advised to "stop trying to operate the economies of other countries," to cut down economic aid "substantially" during 1953, and end it "generally" by June 1954. The surveyors also recommended that foreign aid be administered by the Department of State, in view of the

ultimate responsibility of that agency for all foreign affairs. There were numerous criticisms of specific aspects of the program's operation.[61]

Presumably in response to the findings of inefficiency, the administration quickly announced a sharp cut in the American staff in Paris, where a multiplicity of civil and military missions had built up a controversial "little Washington" of 2,700 employees.[62] But the Truman budget was handled far more gently than the program's critics had hoped for. Eisenhower asked Congress on May 5 for $5.8 billion, a reduction of $1.8 billion. He said nothing about ending the program in 1954; the tenor of his message, in fact, suggested that foreign assistance would continue indefinitely. Congress eventually appropriated $4.5 billion, an amount that disappointed Eisenhower greatly at the time but was probably as much as could reasonably have been expected in view of the economy mood of Congress and opposition to foreign aid on the Republican side.

Meanwhile Stassen had been making a reputation as a cautious but capable administrator. It was noted that he kept his intentions to himself, delegated little, and rarely committed himself without lengthy consideration. However, his initial remarks made a favorable impression on the staff of his agency; although he brought in a handful of special assistants of his own, he continued to consult the key members of the existing staff, most of whom were veterans of the Marshall Plan period. His tangle with McCarthy over the Greek ships on the whole added to his credit. His subordinates appreciated the way he had backed them up and rebuked the Senator for meddling; his retreat on Eisenhower's cue was understandable and suggested a man who could subordinate his own views to maintain unity in the administration. Stassen became known around Washington as a man who did his homework and could discuss the affairs of his agency with far more knowledge and assurance than most of the other new agency heads. As of April, James Reston called him "the 'surprise' of the Eisenhower team," a man "on the rise again after a long stretch on the political skids."[63]

As soon as the Truman budget had been revised, Stassen and the administration's organization consultants turned their attention to reorganization of the foreign aid function. Contrary to the advice of the

[61] The report was made to Stassen on March 24 but was not publicly released until after the administration had completed its revision of the Truman foreign aid budget. *New York Times* (May 22, 1953).

[62] *Ibid.* (Mar. 29, 1953).

[63] *Ibid.* (Apr. 27, 1953).

businessmen-evaluators, the decision was to consolidate the economic and technical assistance functions in an independent agency outside the State Department. Stassen's MSA, the State Department's TCA, and certain functions of the old Director for Mutual Security were to be combined in a new Foreign Operations Administration, with responsibility for developing and administering integrated programs wherever United States aid was given. The Department of Defense would continue to supply military assistance abroad, but in accordance with FOA's country programs. Stassen, as Director of FOA, was to receive policy guidance from the cabinet members principally concerned, and his mission chiefs abroad were to be under the general supervision of the ambassadors, but the agency was to operate with substantial independence. Announced on June 1, the President's reorganization plan encountered no significant opposition in Congress and became effective on August 1.

The presidential plan, however, established only the broad outlines. Stassen's scheme of internal organization, which he announced early in September, immediately aroused controversy. The several constituent parts were substantially merged into a single organization designed to produce unified "country programs." Critics charged that this would blur the previous distinction between massive economic aid, given in support of American alliances, and the relatively "pure" technical assistance to underdeveloped countries regardless of political or military considerations. Truman's "Point Four" concept, which had had enormous appeal to the less developed countries, many of them still uncommitted in the East-West struggle, did indeed seem to be in danger.[64]

Along with the reorganization went a 25 per cent cut in total personnel, both in the headquarters and in the overseas missions, which was required by the appropriation act. The cut was given particular force by legislative language requiring a substantial proportion of the reduction to be in the upper salary brackets. Although the technical situation gave Stassen almost unlimited discretion in determining who would be retained and who would be let out, he ordered all employees to be given written "aptitude tests" to aid him in making these decisions. Many employees and outside organizations objected to these in principle. Others claimed later that it was difficult to see much relation between the test scores and those who had been fired; some of the

[64] A series of articles by Paul P. Kennedy in *New York Times* (Sept. 24, 25, and 26, 1953) emphasizes this point.

highest-scoring employees were dismissed. The axe seemed to have fallen most frequently on officials formerly associated with the technical cooperation program; almost the whole top bracket of men who had developed the "Point Four" concept was eliminated.[65]

Confusion reigned in FOA for the next several months. It took almost to the end of 1953 to "program" (*i.e.*, divide among countries and activities) the funds that had been appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Stassen continued to cling tightly to the power of decision, slowing everything down. After the reorganization, there were a number of posts left unfilled in the new organization, or occupied on only an "acting" basis. Because technical assistance was supposed to be expanding (in contrast to other forms of economic aid), there were soon vacancies for experts overseas. It quickly became clear that political considerations were being taken into account even in the recruiting of skilled technicians. Nevertheless in May 1954, Stassen publicly appealed for 400 persons with appropriate qualifications to come forward as applicants for these important posts.[66]

During 1954 Stassen put into effect several shifts of emphasis, most notably a policy of contracting as much operating responsibility as possible, particularly in the technical assistance program, to private firms, universities, and voluntary organizations. The objects apparently were several: to keep the direct federal payroll down, give the program a "private enterprise" flavor appropriate to a Republican regime, and enhance the "people to people" aspect of foreign aid. Large-scale economic aid was scaled down gradually but never reduced as much as many critics of the program had hoped; the technical assistance program eventually was substantially expanded. Mr. Stassen's task of adjusting the foreign aid program to Republican economy requirements and working out a new organization was not an easy task; the price of survival turned out to be a high one.

[65] According to one report, the officials dismissed from the Institute of Inter-American Affairs (the Latin American arm of the former TCA) had an average of sixteen years of government service. *Washington Post* (Sept. 5, 1953).

[66] *New York Times* (May 3, 1954). At this time, according to Jerry Kluttz, the respected Washington chronicler of civil service matters, FOA was requiring political clearance not only for new appointments to higher positions, but for appointments and *internal promotions* down to the secretarial and clerical level. *Washington Post* (June 13, 1954).

STATESMEN AND SOLDIERS

The 1953 party overturn was the first of modern times in which military policy was at the heart of the new administration's concerns. The cold war, Korea, and Truman's active diplomacy had aroused active and often bitter partisan debate over American military commitments and strategic doctrine. A substantial wing of the Republican party felt that the national interest and perhaps the security of the United States itself had been endangered by Truman's policies, and that the professional integrity and political neutrality of the uniformed military establishment had been compromised in support of those policies. The ugly eruption following General MacArthur's dismissal in 1951 had demonstrated that a considerable number of high military officers also were, for various reasons, dissatisfied enough to lend open support to the political opposition. The very existence of the huge military establishment, consuming more than half of a sharply rising annual budget, seemed an almost insuperable barrier to the achievement of the conservative economic objectives of Republican domestic policy. As shown in previous chapters, Eisenhower and his associates entered office with some partially formed ideas for dealing with these interlocking puzzles. But before trying to put their ideas into effect, they felt it necessary to establish firmer control over the military establishment.

Secretary Wilson

The arrival of Charles E. Wilson and his team of political appointees brought a sharp change in the climate of civil-military relationships in the Pentagon. Wilson's predecessor, Robert A. Lovett, had been keenly aware of the limits of the knowledge and effective authority of civilian officials in dealing with the military. While frequently frustrated by the interservice committee system that had been built into the structure of the Department of Defense, he had shrunk from arbitrary assertions of his own will or judgment of what the national defense required. Lovett and most of the top civilians of the Pentagon going back to Forrestal's time had sought by suggestion, compromise, and negotiation with and between the services to achieve consensus on military programs that were reasonably satisfactory to the military men themselves and that could be harmonized with economic and political considerations at higher levels.

Secretary Wilson, fresh from conquest of the heights of the business world, felt no such inhibitions. He showed but limited interest in Lovett's proffered indoctrination into the subtleties of Pentagon poker and rather shocked his predecessor, according to several reports, by casually remarking that the job appeared to be "about ninety per cent production and ten per cent public relations." Wilson's goals, which he was confident could be achieved by proper application of the know-how of private enterprise, were to get the armed services under administrative control, eliminate waste (of which there was presumed to be a tremendous amount), and drastically reduce military expenditures. He and his deputy, Roger Kyes, whose reputation as a "hatchet man" had preceded him, soon made it clear to both their civilian and military staffs that they wanted action, not quibbling objections. High-ranking officers were left with bruised feelings by their new chiefs' brusque commands and impatience with professional military opinion.

Wilson and his associates gave early attention to three important projects. One was a hasty revision of the Truman defense budget, which culminated in a $5 billion cut in Air Force funds.[67] The second, carried on concurrently with the budget review, was a study of the administrative structure of the Department of Defense. The third was to install officers of their own choice in the top military positions.

Defense Department Reorganization

On one point Wilson took advantage of previous public debate and the experience of his predecessor. With Eisenhower's concurrence, he decided to waste no time in adjusting the organization to bring the three military services under firmer control of the Secretary of Defense. On February 19 he announced the appointment of a Special Committee on Department of Defense Organization, headed by Nelson Rockefeller.[68] In the next few weeks the group studied various proposals and

[67] The way this was jammed past the military chiefs, and General Vandenberg's futile "revolt," have been described in the preceding chapter.

[68] This committee was essentially the Rockefeller-Flemming-Milton Eisenhower Advisory Committee on Government Organization, augmented for this purpose by former Secretary Lovett, General Bradley, Dr. Vannevar Bush, and David A. Sarnoff of RCA. (Sarnoff was head of a special commission on military man-power problems established by Truman; it was now terminated and merged with the work of the new committee.) Principal staff members of the committee were H. Struve Hensel, a New York lawyer and former Navy Department official, and Don K. Price, one of Washington's most respected administrative advisers, who had just completed a tour of duty in the Pentagon.

consulted most of the former top civilian and military officers of the defense establishment. The staff worked closely with the administrative specialists of the Budget Bureau. Quickly reaching agreement, the committee made its report early in April.[69]

On April 30, Eisenhower announced a presidential reorganization plan based on the Rockefeller report. The key to the plan was the premise, set forth in the letter of transmittal to Congress, that the authority of the Secretary of Defense extended to all activities of all components of the military establishment. This assertion, which was backed up by a legal opinion, contradicted the frequent claims that certain statutory language requiring the three services to be "separately administered" put their internal affairs beyond the authority of the Secretary of Defense and relegated him to a broad coordinating role. On the basis of this premise, it was proposed to strengthen the organizational means at the disposal of the Secretary. The Munitions Board and the Research and Development Board, high-level policy-making committees whose work the Secretary had been unable to control effectively, were to be abolished. To replace these bodies and provide the Secretary with greater staff resources, there were proposed six new assistant secretaries (in addition to the three existing ones) and a General Counsel. (This group quickly became known as "Wilson's ten vice-presidents.") The plan also provided for more concentration of responsibility in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which had often been bogged down in petty detail, interservice rivalry, and log-rolling. The Secretary of Defense was now to choose the director of the military staff that served the Joint Chiefs, and authority to supervise the work of this Joint Staff was clearly assigned to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.[70]

Some friends of the separate services charged that the reorganization would destroy the integrity of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, make the Department of Defense into a "German general staff" or a huge bureaucratic monstrosity, and set up the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a "man on horseback." However, the Eisenhower administration's brisk initiative, which was backed by the approval of Truman's Secretary of Defense and most of the high-ranking military officers who had had responsibilities transcending the interests of the

[69] *Department of Defense Organization.* Report of the Rockefeller Committee, Apr. 11, 1953. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Committee Print, 83 Cong. 1 sess. (1953).

[70] Reorganization Plan 6 of 1953, and accompanying message to Congress, Apr. 30, 1953. For an analysis, see Walter Millis, *Arms and the State* (1958), pp. 379-87.

separate services, was sufficient to put the plan through without difficulty. A resolution of disapproval was defeated in the House on June 27 by a vote of 234-108, and the plan went into effect four days later at the end of the required sixty-day waiting period. Reorganization at the Department of Defense level was followed by "business methods" studies in the three services and several functional areas of the defense establishment.

Bad Chiefs and Good Chiefs

While waiting for the reorganization plan to take effect, Eisenhower and Wilson turned their attention to the top military positions, seeking chiefs for the three services and a chairman of the Joint Chiefs who would have the confidence of congressional leaders and be amenable to the policy changes they had in mind. It was not a clearly established prerogative of a new administration to install its own choices immediately in these positions. Officers were appointed to them for specific terms, and usually incumbents served out their terms regardless of political turnover.[71] However, military high command, as Walter Millis notes, had by this time "become unavoidably political."[72] Toward the end of April, Senator Taft returned from a golfing trip to Georgia with Eisenhower and told reporters that he had strongly urged the President to clean house in the Pentagon, if necessary appointing a set of "stand-by chiefs" who could lay plans and advise the new administration pending the expiration of the terms of the current chiefs. Other Republican legislators supported Taft's request.[73]

Results were soon forthcoming. On May 7 it was announced that the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, would retire on June 30; his deputy, General Nathan F. Twining, was designated to succeed him.[74] Several days later, other changes were announced. Admiral Arthur W. Radford, with whom Eisenhower and Wilson had been impressed during their trip to Korea, was designated to succeed General Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, on comple-

[71] It might be recalled that the controversial General Leonard Wood served out his term as Army Chief of Staff following the accession of Wilson, as did General Douglas MacArthur after Roosevelt's inauguration in 1933.

[72] Millis, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

[73] *Washington Post* (Apr. 22, 1953); *New York Times* (Apr. 22, 33, 1953).

[74] This switch had been anticipated for some time, since Vandenberg was serving on a one-year extension of a four-year appointment and had recently undergone major surgery. *Ibid.* (May 8, 1953).

tion of his term on August 16. Radford was known as an advocate of a more forceful military program for the Far East, in contrast to Bradley's caution about commitments in that area; his appointment was also considered a blow to the Air Force, since Radford had been one of the leaders of the 1949 "admirals' revolt" against the policy of heavy reliance on the B-36 long-range bomber. General Matthew B. Ridgway, who had made a distinguished record as a field commander in Korea and as Eisenhower's successor at NATO, was designated to follow General J. Lawton Collins as Army Chief of Staff, also in mid-August. To complete the sweep, it was announced that Admiral William M. Fechteler, whose appointment as Chief of Naval Operations would not expire until 1955, would resign with Bradley and Collins; his successor was to be Admiral Robert B. Carney. There were strong indications that care had been taken to make sure that the new chiefs were acceptable to Taft.[75]

Thus chosen well in advance, the "good chiefs" were assembled in Washington in July to get acquainted before taking office and to begin looking over the military situation in the light of the recent foreign policy review of the National Security Council and in anticipation of the fall budget-making season. An early event was a three-day meeting at the nearby Quantico Marine Base of the President and Secretary Wilson, their principal civilian assistants, and the new and old chiefs. As this session was breaking up, the Korean armistice, on which so many of the new administration's hopes depended, was signed.

SECURITY WITH SOLVENCY

With the achievement of more satisfactory control over both the civilian and military machinery, and the Korean war ended, the administration was free in the latter part of 1953 to hammer out its basic policies for national security. The essential problem was the one the

[75] *Ibid.* (May 13, 14, and 15, 1953); *Washington Post* (May 13 and 14, 1953). This was later corroborated by Taft's biographer:

"A friend asked the Senator in this period, 'Did you select the new Chiefs?'

"I wouldn't say that," said Taft with a smile, "But I *will* say that before a single new appointment was announced Wilson had me out to his apartment . . . and showed me the list. I found it entirely satisfactory.' " (White, *op. cit.*, p. 250.)

The timing of these announcements should perhaps be noted. It was directly after the April 30 meeting at the White House, at which Taft had angrily criticized the administration's failure to make bigger cuts in Truman's defense budget.

President and his closest advisers had clearly in mind from the beginning: to find a military policy that would provide adequate security at a cost that a Republican administration could consider politically and economically supportable over a long haul. On the whole, the problem was solved to Eisenhower's satisfaction. While later events would cause modifications, the main outlines of the policies then laid down were to persist throughout his two presidential terms.

The New Look

During the autumn, under Admiral Radford's leadership, the military planners sketched out and cleared with the NSC a program that appeared adaptable to the Eisenhower administration's economic cloth. It was agreed that the United States had been trying to be prepared to fight too many different kinds of wars, by too many different strategies, and had never fully clarified the place of nuclear weapons. The new policy explicitly accepted nuclear weapons as the foundation of American power, to be used in any major conflict. It was planned to have the periphery of the free world guarded mainly by local forces, linked in regional alliances and strengthened by American military assistance. So far as possible, consistent with treaty obligations, American forces would be pulled in from the perimeter and grouped in strategic areas as mobile reserves, using the most advanced weapons. The United States would be ensured against a quick knock-out blow from Russian bombers by a far-flung early warning and air defense system. But the core of free world strength would be the American intercontinental bombers with the H-bomb, the threat of their great striking power calculated to deter aggression anywhere. Such a program, employing the newest military technology, would require less American man power and deliver "more bang for a buck." The "New Look" in defense began to be described in general terms in speeches by the administration's military and civilian chiefs during October and November.

From Candor to Wheaties

Perhaps as important as what was actually said in the early descriptions of the "New Look" was what was not said—particularly about nuclear weapons. This problem had been with the administration from

the beginning. One of its inheritances from Truman had been a frightening peep into the future in the form of an NSC paper discussing the implications of the H-bomb and growing Soviet military capability.[76] This information stimulated a considerable amount of soul-searching in NSC study groups during the spring of 1953. Rumors seeped into the press, and there were voice-of-doom columns from the Alsop brothers. Eisenhower accepted a staff recommendation that the American people be given more information on the facts of life in the nuclear age. In April, an interagency group known as "Operation Candor" was set up under C. D. Jackson's direction to prepare a presidential speech.

The writing team produced several drafts, but none satisfied either the authors or the President. The difficulty was uncertainty about the purpose. Some of those urging publicity looked on it as a prelude to an announcement by Eisenhower that the national situation was far more grave than had been realized, and that an even greater defense effort was required. At this stage, however, the administration was heading in a different direction. The Korean armistice was in sight, the Air Force 1954 budget was being trimmed by $5 billion, and the Joint Chiefs were being turned out preparatory to development of a new look in defense. Asking for a big new military program would have been premature and, in any event, almost impossible to reconcile with the administration's prior commitments.[77] If there was no specific program or action to recommend, neither the President nor his associates could work up any enthusiasm for frightening the public with talk about the awesome destructiveness of thermonuclear weapons. It was also possible that such talk would be interpreted abroad as saber (or bomb) rattling. Failing to find an acceptable positive note, "Operation Candor" was at a standstill by midsummer.

Then, in August, came the report that the Russians had exploded their own thermonuclear (hydrogen bomb) device. In September, Eisenhower revived the old "Candor" project with an idea he had generated during his Colorado vacation: What if the United States proposed to join the Russians in turning over fissionable material to the United Nations to be used for peaceful purposes? Lewis L. Strauss, Eisenhower's recent appointee as Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, de-

[76] Joseph and Stewart Alsop, *The Reporter's Trade* (1958), p. 61.

[77] One of Truman's recommendations—to build a more adequate continental air defense system—was refined and incorporated in the new look program. Proposals for a gigantic civil defense and shelter program were put on the shelf.

veloped the idea further. In October there began an effort to perfect a new proposal to be launched from the platform of the "Candor" material. Perhaps here was a way to convince the world of America's interest in using the atom for peace, not war. At a breakfast conference, "Operation Candor" was redesignated "Operation Wheaties."

After eleven drafts, a clearance with Great Britain and France, and an elaborate publicity buildup, Eisenhower delivered the speech to the United Nations General Assembly on December 8. Beginning with a discussion of nuclear weapons, and calling attention to the United States' determination to respond in kind to atomic attack, he ended by proposing the establishment of an international agency, under United Nations auspices, to receive fissionable material and put it to work for the benefit of mankind. Reckoned one of Eisenhower's most impressive performances, the speech was favorably heard around the world. While there were no immediate results, the "atoms for peace" policy was later further refined and elaborated and eventually led to an international conference, the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and disarmament negotiations with the Russians.

From the administration's viewpoint, the shrinking from candor led to one of Eisenhower's most significant accomplishments. However, Eisenhower's critics were convinced that instead of (or perhaps in addition to) the peaceful atom proposals, the administration should have rallied the nation to ever-greater sacrifices in the common defense, regardless of the political or financial expense.[78]

The Army Under the New Look

Shortly after the atoms for peace proposal Eisenhower made an important decision that reflected the importance of fiscal considerations in the new defense policy. By the time the new look had been formulated and approved in general terms, the 1953 fall budget-making season was far advanced. When the Joint Chiefs produced an estimate of the requirements for the first year under the new program, the figure was considerably higher than the target the Treasury and Budget Bureau, with the President's approval, had given to Secretary Wilson. For several

[78] "From that moment onward," intoned the Alsops five years later, "there was a lie in the Eisenhower administration's soul." *The Reporter's Trade,* p. 62. The administration's side of this story is told in Donovan, *op. cit.,* pp. 183-93.

weeks there was jockeying back and forth; the financial men stuck to their ceiling figure, and the Joint Chiefs were unable to agree on a program that would stay under it. The administration, having gone through the elaborate exercise of formulating a streamlined defense policy, was reluctant to shortcut it by arbitrary budgetary decisions, since this would add weight to the growing number of charges that the Republicans were subordinating the nation's security to political and economic objectives.

Finally, in mid-December, Eisenhower and Wilson set a defense budget figure about $4 billion lower than that of the previous year. Most of the reduction came out of the Army; General Ridgway, the new Chief of Staff, got about $2 billion less than he had asked for. In his State of the Union message in January 1954, Eisenhower said that the new defense budget was "based on a new military program unanimously recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff." It may have been "based on" such a program, but the Army figure for fiscal 1955 reflected a force level that Ridgway had agreed might be feasible toward the end of a three-year new look program, under certain conditions. As Ridgway insisted in private then, and publicly later, the administration had sped up the schedule and disregarded the fact that the specified conditions did not yet exist. This was the beginning of a long period of disillusionment with the Eisenhower administration—and particularly with Secretary Wilson—that was to be suffered by General Ridgway and his successors. Later budget seasons saw a repetition of similar squeeze plays, with the Army usually coming out on the losing end.[79]

Massive Retaliation

The implications of the new strategic doctrine were further clarified in public speeches and writings of Eisenhower and Dulles early in 1954. In his State of the Union message, the President emphasized "a massive capability to strike back" at aggressors. Several days later, in an impor-

[79] The battle of the military budget occasionally erupted in the press during later 1953 and early 1954. Ridgway published his side of the story in Matthew B. Ridgway (as told to Harold H. Martin), *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* (1956). Publication of Ridgway's comments stimulated a number of post-mortems, which brought out more of the facts than had been publicly available at the time. See Hanson W. Baldwin, "Ridgway vs. Eisenhower," *New York Times* (Jan. 24, 1956). Ridgway's successor who took over from him in 1955 has recently told a similar story. Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (1960).

tant speech in New York, Secretary Dulles pointed out that local defenses alone could not contain powerful aggressors who could choose the time and circumstances of aggression. "Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power." The United States would "depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing."

The "massive retaliation" doctrine gave rise to misunderstanding and controversy. Neither then nor later did Dulles say that *any* instance of aggression would immediately bring down the atomic bombs on the aggressor. It was apparently his intention, however, to leave communist leaders a little uneasy on that point. This he perhaps did; unfortunately, the uneasiness was shared by the American public and the free world allies. The decision on the Army budget demonstrated that the new look did imply a sharp limitation on the United States' ability to fight conventional wars. Whether that meant a corresponding danger that a "brushfire" somewhere on the free world perimeter would blaze into a world holocaust, remained a matter of controversy.[80] At any rate, the new look, under the nuclear shield, provided enough security to permit the administration to reduce military expenditures in accordance with its economic objectives and domestic political commitments. For better or worse, Eisenhower had worked out a solution for his Great Equation.

Enunciation of the massive retaliation doctrine, approximately a year after Eisenhower's inauguration, marked the end of the phase of most active adjustment in foreign affairs. By then he and his associates had put their stamp on the institutions of foreign and military affairs, and the effective policies were of their own making or approval. Introspection gave way to external negotiations. Conferences at Bermuda, Berlin, and Geneva; threats of war over Indo-China, Quemoy and Matsu; and the crises of Hungary and Suez lay ahead.

[80] Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-28; Beal, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-89; Millis, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-98.

CHAPTER 37

EISENHOWER AND THE BUREAUCRACY

In one way or another, most of President Eisenhower's initial problems and commitments involved the personnel, structure, and procedures of the executive branch—the bureaucracy. Campaigning against "the mess in Washington," the Republicans had promised managerial reforms to guarantee an honest and efficient regime. Action was needed to quiet the continuing agitation about loyalty and security of government personnel. The usual transition problem of patronage was particularly acute because of the long absence of the Republicans from power and the factional situation inside the party. Promises to conduct a re-examination of substantive policy raised the prospect that some of the administrative machinery might be dismantled and the question whether the civil service would be properly amenable to new policies. This chapter deals briefly—an adequate treatment would require a book in itself—with the efforts of the Eisenhower administration to assure itself of control and to carry out its policy objectives, the difficulties it encountered, and the impact of its efforts on the bureaucracy. Some related aspects of the Eisenhower style and machinery for executive leadership are touched on in closing.

STATE OF THE BUREAUCRACY

Vast changes had been wrought in the administrative system since the Republicans last occupied the White House. Most startling was

the change in sheer size—more than a four-fold expansion since 1932.[1] The vast establishment performed tasks and employed technologies that had not been dreamed of in 1932. Complexity of structure and demands on top management had increased correspondingly. To many of the Republicans, who now approached it gingerly, the bureaucracy seemed formidable, baffling, sinister, with procedural toils to trap the unwary, and almost beyond rational adjustment or control. Other Republicans were more optimistic, feeling that the system would surely yield to an application of the principles of sound business management.

Such views tended to underestimate the administrative evolution and changes in the environment of public service that had occurred since 1932. On balance, the federal government was probably as inherently manageable as it ever had been. Public administration as an organized body of knowledge and an ethic of professional conduct had come a long way, its application enhanced by such landmark enterprises as the President's Committee on Administrative Management in the 1930's and the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government (first Hoover Commission) in the late 1940's. Despite the government's growth in size, structural sprawl had been checked and a great deal of effective administrative power put at the disposal of the President and the department heads. Budgeting, accounting, personnel management, organization analysis, program planning, and other so-called "tools of management" had been given institutional form. Strategic levers were available, if the top managers knew which ones—and when—to pull.

Stability and Suspicion

By the middle of Truman's Presidency, the bureaucracy had emerged from the shocks of the New Deal and World War II and achieved a stability that it had not enjoyed since the late 1920's. The Korean War produced strains but did not shake the essential structure. Careerists with shared experiences extending back over the eventful years occupied many of the leading posts. Coverage under the merit system,

[1] From 1932 to 1952, federal civilian employment had increased from 600,000 to over 2.5 million. The military establishment, which had numbered 300,000 men under arms in the early 1930's, had leveled off at 1.5 million after World War II but was now at 3.5 million because of the Korean war.

which had dropped from 80 per cent in 1932 to 60 per cent in 1936, was at a new high of 86 per cent.[2] This statistic reflected both the continued drying up of many of the old areas of large-scale patronage in the federal service and the extension of the merit system into the upper reaches of the administrative hierarchy. High-level careerism was no longer confined, as it largely had been in 1932, to the scientific and technical services. Career men now bore many important responsibilities for the direction of major economic and social programs, as well as holding almost undisputed sway over the more strictly administrative activities of the government.

Nevertheless, the moral and ideological condition of the bureaucracy had been one of the main campaign issues of 1952. Republicans had charged cronyism, corruption, incompetence, tenderness to communism, lust for power, and devotion to the Democratic party behind a façade of civil service neutrality. While from the perspective of eight years later it appears that such charges were highly exaggerated, there was something in the Truman administration record to sustain most of them. They strongly conditioned the general attitude with which the Eisenhower administration approached the bureaucracy.

The Problem of Neutrality

One highly important issue was the party neutrality and the potential responsiveness of the civil service to new political leadership. On this, there were wide diversities of approach among the Republicans. A few of the new executive appointees took the neutrality of the bureaucracy more or less for granted, assuming that while it might be necessary to make a few replacements in key spots, the bulk of the service would fulfill its obligation to the government of the day. But there

[2] This loose usage of "the merit system" equates it with those positions filled by competitive examination under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission. The 86 per cent figure fails to include employees in the special personnel systems of such agencies as the FBI, the TVA, and the AEC, and a number of overseas positions filled on an effective if not formal merit basis. For the entire federal civilian service, estimates of the proportion effectively on a "merit basis" ranged between 90 and 95 per cent. See U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1959*, p. 390; *Positions Not Under the Civil Service*, S. Doc. 18, 83 Cong., 1 sess., Pts. 1 and 2 (1953); Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, *Task Force Report on Personnel and Civil Service* (1955), p. 129. (Cited hereafter as Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service.*) Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the U. S. Civil Service* (1958), pp. 441-45, 490.

were a few executive officials, and a great many Republican congressmen, who suspected that the service was dominated by dedicated Democrats who would resist or sabotage the new administration. Others, not so extreme, were nevertheless concerned about the effect of twenty years of Democratic control on bureaucratic attitudes and thought patterns. They reasoned that those who had got to the top under Roosevelt and Truman must have believed strongly in their policies. Would not such officials have deep-seated loyalties that would, whether they realized it or not, cause them to twist facts and give their new bosses bad advice? How could those who had served the Fair Deal give a Republican administration the loyal support—and, yes, the creative advice—to which it was entitled? Such symbols of the old order as Oscar Ewing and Oscar Chapman would be gone, but as *Fortune* warned shortly before inauguration, "a legion of little Oscars" would linger on.[3]

The validity of such suspicions could only be proved or disproved by experience, but to those familiar with the governmental milieu, the most extreme forms of such charges—that most of the bureaucracy was devoted to the Democratic party as such—appeared unwarranted. It was not altogether unreasonable to suspect that in the privacy of the voting booth, there were more Democrats than Republicans among the higher civil service. But many who were known to be Republicans also held high office. Certainly there was no mass hostility to Eisenhower; the Virginia and Maryland areas adjacent to the District of Columbia, where civil servants comprised a significant portion of the voters, had voted for him by a substantial majority, and installed Republican congressmen as well. Partisanship in the usual sense had been at low ebb in the bureaucracy for a number of years. And, whatever their personal party preferences, many high officials looked forward to the Eisenhower administration with the expectation of more effective political leadership than they had received in the recent past.

It was true, however, that by the end of the Truman administration the distinction between "political" and "career" appointees was badly blurred. The formal appointment status of individuals no longer clearly indicated (if, indeed, it ever had) either the circumstances of their original entry or the nature of their present functions. Extension of the merit system had resulted in "covering in" many people who

[3] "The Little Oscars and Civil Service," *Fortune* (January 1953), p. 77.

had originally entered through noncompetitive channels. Increasing professionalization and long stability had produced a generation of civil servants equipped to take an active role in policy formation within the administration. Furthermore, partly due to the political weakness of the Truman administration, there had been an increasing tendency for high ranking civil servants to take on the essentially political function of explaining and defending their agencies' programs before Congress and the public. At the same time, there had been a tendency to fill the posts remaining outside the merit system—even some of the presidential appointments—with men who had come up through the career service. Many other "political" appointees had been chosen for their expertness, managerial competence, and dedication to the particular programs under their care rather than for service to the Democratic party.

Behind this confusion of labels lay a good deal of confusion among the bureaucrats themselves about what to expect from a new administration and what their own obligations were in such a situation. To be sure, most of the lesser presidential appointees and some occupants of positions outside the merit system realized that they were justifiably tagged as Democratic partisans and expected to be replaced. Even some who were nominal civil servants recognized their own partisanship or antipathy to the goals enunciated in the Republican platform, and made plans to leave. But the bulk of the civil servants and a substantial portion of the exempt appointees—including some presidential appointees—did not regard themselves as especially political and presumed that they might remain to serve the Republicans. To such people, the notion that they would resist or sabotage the new administration seemed fantastic.

It could not, however, be said that the higher officials as a class were neutral in the sense that many Republicans wished them to be. These men were professionals in government. They believed in the importance of the programs under their care, and they inevitably had views about policy, stemming from years of experience, which they believed they were entitled to have taken into account. Most of the bureaucrats still considered themselves capable of giving relatively objective advice to their new bosses, and of accepting and executing loyally any policy changes that a moderate President like Eisenhower was likely to make. The typical higher civil servant felt himself neutral enough for most practical purposes, but there remained some uncertainty about what he

should do, or what his new boss should do, if the two found themselves seriously incompatible.

Such speculation about how neutral was neutral meant little to many of the Eisenhower appointees, particularly those with little previous government experience. They tended to underestimate the professionalization that had taken place and the strength of the civil service ideology; they did not appreciate the bureaucrat's distinction between loyalty to his program and loyalty to a political party. They observed that most of the higher bureaucrats had come in under the Democrats. The Republicans approached with caution, and their first thought was to bring in enough people of their own choice to achieve mutual protection and control.

POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS AND POLICY CONTROL

The first step in establishing Republican control was to fill the high political offices. The dimensions of this job had been sketched by the McKinsey and Company survey of federal positions that had been commissioned before election by a group of Eisenhower backers in New York City.[4] The authors of the survey had looked at the government as it then operated and identified what they considered the 915 top positions of policy making significance, and classified them into five categories of priority for attention by the new administration. The first group consisted of 131 high policy officials—cabinet and subcabinet officers, heads of important independent agencies, and top officials of the White House and Executive Office. The second group consisted of 73 key policy advisers and assistants to the first group. It was recommended that the 204 offices in the first and second categories be restaffed as soon as possible after inauguration day.[5]

[4] See above, Chap. 32 and Chap. 33.

[5] A third category included 393 second-level policy positions such as miscellaneous policy aides and special assistants, chiefs of the more political bureaus, ambassadors and chiefs of economic missions abroad, and important commissioners with time remaining to serve on term appointments. The administration was advised to give early attention to establishing satisfactory policy control of these positions. A fourth small category listed 13 posts traditionally important for political or patronage reasons but of secondary policy significance (*e.g.*, Treasurer of the United States). Holdover incumbents posed little threat to policy control but could be replaced at the administration's political convenience. A fifth category consisted of 305 positions of some policy significance but with a high proportion of scientific, technical, or strictly administrative re-

Problems of Executive Recruiting

The process of filling these offices had been well started before inauguration day. Staff work at the Hotel Commodore by Herbert Brownell, Lucius Clay, and others had resulted in Eisenhower choices for perhaps 50 of the top offices before January 20. By the end of January, Eisenhower had submitted to the Senate the names of 42 nominees for high office in Washington, plus 8 for important embassies.

However, once the backlog of choices made at the Commodore had been worked off, there was increasing difficulty, and the pace of office filling slowed noticeably. Eisenhower submitted only 20 first-rank domestic nominations in February, 21 in March, and lesser numbers in the succeeding months. Heads for some of the important independent agencies were not designated until well into March, and it was about six months before all of the roughly 200 high-priority offices were filled.[6] Long vacancies at high levels held up decisions about personnel and programs further down the line.

Several things changed the appointment situation about the time the administration moved into Washington, so that appointments not settled in the relatively centralized staff operation at the Commodore had to be worked out in a far more complicated field of forces. The early appointments had to a large extent been "presidential," in the sense that the President-elect himself was expected to make a personal choice. But for offices at the undersecretary and assistant secretary level, Eisen-

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sponsibilities. It included chiefs and assistant chiefs of the more technical and less controversial bureaus, and other miscellaneous administrative officers and program specialists. Replacements in this group would have to be made with special attention to technical competence and continuity of administration.

The basis of appointment to these positions was roughly but not precisely related to their order of policy significance. Of the total of 915, 28 were filled by the President alone and 356 by the President with Senate confirmation. The department or agency heads appointed the remainder: 117 completely exempt from civil service, 143 under Schedule A (a civil service category in which the agency head had substantial but not complete discretion), and 271 under regular civil service with the incumbents customarily enjoying continuing tenure (although non-veterans could be removed for cause by departmental action). There were, however, some anomalies in official status. For example, 10 of the second and 57 of the third groups were officially under full civil service. And in the fifth group, where two thirds were under civil service, there were also 30 presidential appointees. McKinsey and Company, "Restaffing the Executive Branch of the Federal Government at the Policy Level" (Report delivered to Harold E. Talbott, October and December 1952).

[6] *Congressional Record,* Vol. 99, Pts. 1, 2, and 3 (1953) *passim.*

hower scrupulously refrained from dictating choices to his cabinet officers. For some of the departments his staff had possibilities to suggest, which were in many cases accepted by the department heads. For other departments, particularly those involving complex interest group relationships, the Commodore staff could not be so useful, and the new secretaries were left to follow their own impulses and find their own prospects—a process that took a considerable amount of time and exposed them to heavy pressures. By now, the Republican senators' resentment at not being consulted on the early appointments had led to protests and Eisenhower's so-called "Commodore Agreement" to give the Senate greater influence in such matters. Taking advantage of this pledge and Eisenhower's obvious desire to retain their favor, senators sometimes refused to "clear" the administration's tentative choices and pushed forward their own candidates. The public uproar over the Wilson conflict of interest case introduced a new complication.

The administration's internal procedures for making high appointments also were not clear. After inauguration, Herbert Brownell gradually receded from his pivotal position to concentrate on the Department of Justice and the judiciary, leaving the presidential interest guarded mainly by Sherman Adams. But Adams had a great many other things to be concerned with, and the distribution of influence among the White House, the department heads, the Senate, and the Republican National Committee remained unsettled and a source of constant irritation.[7]

These developments not only slowed down the process of filling the offices but made some difference in the kind of people who got them. The Taft men were now in an excellent position to demand fulfillment of Eisenhower's Morningside Heights promise not to discriminate against them in appointments, and the senators and party organization men sponsored a far more heterogeneous body of candidates than the predominantly eastern, business executive, "modern Republican" types that had come to the attention of the recruiters at the Commodore. This new line-up of forces and the commitment to factional "balance" explained, at least in part, such appointments as an ex-congressman with a record of opposition to government housing programs to be Housing

[7] Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (1956), pp. 95-101; Philip S. Wilder, Jr., "The National Committee of the Party in Power, 1953-58," paper delivered before the American Political Science Association, 1958, pp. 11-15; Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 491; *New York Times* (May 7, 24, 1953).

Administrator; well-known protectionists put on the Tariff Commission and in a strategic spot in the Department of Interior; extreme conservatives from the Midwest becoming Assistant Secretary of Commerce and chairman of an important Commission on Intergovernmental Relations; and other appointments that seemed incongruous in a supposedly middle-of-the-road administration.

Firings and Survivals

Long before the turnover process was complete for the subcabinet and other high political offices, there was personnel action at the second and third policy levels—bureau chiefs and assistants, heads of departmental staff offices, and other high-level posts not vacated on inauguration day but in which the new administration had to consider making replacements. Here the initiative in firing, if not complete control over hiring, rested mainly with the department and agency heads. Beginning in the late spring and continuing through the summer of 1953, there were important, difficult, and controversial decisions about who should go and who should stay.

As previously indicated, officials at this level were a mixed group, both in terms of how political they were and the formal basis of appointment. Those serving at the pleasure of the President had submitted resignations as a matter of form, and most of the others, even many under civil service, had informally indicated their willingness to leave or take other assignments if that were the new administration's pleasure. Others, however, intended to wait and see what the new administration would do, and some who had civil service status were not inclined to make it easy for the new administration to displace them.

One special group of officials whose fates were watched closely by students of public administration were the assistant secretaries for administration. Pursuant to recommendations of the first Hoover Commission, these positions had recently been established in five departments—Treasury, Justice, Interior, Commerce, and Labor. Their duties were to supervise the budget, personnel, and other housekeeping and management services. With the idea of keeping them out of politics, they had been made not presidential but secretarial appointments; the positions were not in the competitive service but were filled by appoint-

ment from the career service. The incumbents were thus the highest ranking career men in their respective departments, and there was much interest in whether nonpartisanship and continuity could be maintained at that level. The transition was the first major test.

In only one case was the institution clearly rejected. The Administrative Assistant Secretary of Commerce was let go and replaced by an outside appointee.[8] The other four incumbents were obviously on thin ice for a time, but they survived. The manner of their survival was disappointing to those observers who had hoped to see these positions evolve so that their incumbents became symbols of continuity, standing as buffers between the bureaucracy and the politicians. They survived in part through their usefulness as sources of administrative and political advice, and in part by demonstrating their ability to get the things done that the new secretaries wanted done. The latter might include cutting the departmental budget, carrying out a reorganization, pointing out ways to dispose of unwanted individuals, or even steering legislation through Congress. However, the effect of the transition on these positions was to diminish for the time being their influence on policy and general departmental matters and to confine them more strictly to a ministerial role in the sphere of their technical competence.

Among the bureau chiefs and other key program officials, the pattern of firings and survivals varied a great deal from department to department, reflecting both the attitudes of the department heads and the extent of political controversy surrounding the agency. In the military departments, there was relatively little turnover below the assistant secretary level, as Secretary Wilson and his colleagues placed a high value on managerial expertness and were not particularly interested in patronage. In the Department of Labor, Secretary Durkin's sympathy with the work of the department and peculiar position within the administration served to protect the staff from pressure by the hostile Republicans in Congress. In other departments, however, officials who headed "New Deal" type programs, or who had incurred the wrath of interest groups with easy access to the new administration, were likely to be displaced. To no one's surprise, Secretary McKay made short work of Michael Straus, who had entered the department as a public relations assistant to Secretary Ickes and risen to be head of the politically potent

[8] In fact, the official standing of the position was changed back to that of a presidential appointment.

Bureau of Reclamation. McKay also forced out Marion Clawson, head of the Bureau of Land Management, who had come up the career ladder but had become a controversial figure through his agency's involvement with conflicts over resource use in the West. Secretary Benson lost no time in disposing of a former Democratic Secretary of Agriculture, Claude Wickard, now chief of the Rural Electrification Administration; of Louis H. Bean, economic adviser to Secretary Brannan; and other top officials suspected of having to do with the controversial Brannan Plan for agricultural adjustment.

Except in such cases as the FBI, where J. Edgar Hoover's public popularity made him virtually untouchable, and possibly in some of the more obscure and technical bureaus that had long been 100 per cent civil service and had never offended anyone, there was heavy pressure for the jobs of officials in the borderland of politics and administration. If the new secretaries themselves did not take steps to put in their own men, they were besieged by congressmen or previously disadvantaged interest groups to make changes. In many instances they resisted these pressures; in other cases they did not. Some officials previously considered competent and nonpartisan were let go in situations where the election had not produced any visible mandate for important policy change. For example, the career head of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of Interior was demoted, and an outsider brought in to take his place. The Commissioner for Social Security was squeezed out by Mrs. Hobby, despite the administration's promise to preserve and extend his program. Perhaps the most celebrated case of this kind was the attempted firing of Dr. Allen V. Astin, head of the National Bureau of Standards, in the aftermath of a dispute over the Bureau's testing of a commercial battery additive product. Secretary of Commerce Weeks and Assistant Secretary Craig Shaeffer, who felt that under Astin the Bureau was not properly sympathetic to the problems of businessmen, were forced to retreat in the face of a storm of criticism from the press, Congress, and virtually the entire scientific world.[9]

The Astin case and a few firings for what appeared to be purely partisan reasons aroused considerable controversy. Aside from partisan Democratic criticism, many saw these actions as threatening the entire

[9] The Astin case made headlines almost daily from April 1, 1953, when Astin's resignation was announced, until mid-November, when a special committee of scientists validated the bureau's handling of the additive problem and Weeks retreated. Coverage in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* was complete and has been relied on.

principle of high-level careerism. Certainly they had damaging effects on employee morale and continuity of administration in many agencies. The administration, however, defended the firings as legitimate and necessary for the achievement of policy control, and partisan Republicans in Congress and elsewhere grumbled because a cleaner sweep was not being made.

Replacement Problems

The department heads soon found that getting rid of an incumbent did not give them complete control of the job. Some of the positions, either because of their technical status in the career system or the exacting requirements of the jobs themselves, almost had to be filled by promotion from within. Retaining the incumbent or promoting from within often was the simplest solution, because throwing the job open to outside recruiting admitted a multitude of conflicting claims and pressures. It was sometimes difficult to find willing and available Republicans with the requisite technical or professional standing. It was often especially difficult to match job competence with the political requirements of party organization endorsement and senatorial clearance. Many important jobs remain unfilled for weeks and months, while the parties at interest wrangled. Other positions went to appointees whose views and sponsorship raised questions about their potential controllability by the President.[10]

A survey made later by the second Hoover Commission showed that there had been a turnover of 44 per cent of the chiefs and assistant chiefs of bureaus and important staff offices between January 1953 and March 1954.[11] The formal appointment status of the various positions

[10] One of the most bizarre incidents of the period concerned a nomination for head of the Bureau of Mines, which had to be withdrawn after the nominee indicated to the cognizant Senate committee that he intended to continue drawing his pension from Anaconda Copper, and that he thought the mine safety law he would have to administer was a "phony." (*New York Times,* June 24, 25, 1953.) There were a number of cases (of which Scott McLeod, the State Department security chief, was perhaps the most prominent) where important executive posts went to ex-congressional employees and others whose loyalties appeared to run most strongly to legislators of the Taft wing of the party. Such appointments might ultimately cement the party together, or they might weaken the President's ability to control his own administration.

[11] Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service,* p. 215. The McKinsey survey, which covered a similar but by no means identical group of positions at roughly this hierarchical level, had classified 406 out of 711 (57 per cent) as secondary policy makers, with a presumption in favor of a change of incumbents, and 305 (43 per cent) as mainly technical, with a presumption against change.

often did not correspond to public expectations or what actually happened to incumbents. Some presidential appointees were retained while some civil servants were dismissed. Despite occasional administration complaints that the civil service status of some of these jobs restricted its freedom of action, a Hoover Commission survey found that competitive status "did not make any appreciable difference in the turnover rate." Civil servant incumbents who did not resign voluntarily could be displaced by abolishing their jobs, reorganizing the agency, or having the Civil Service Commission reclassify the jobs out of competitive status.[12]

POLICY, POLITICS, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

The lack of advance planning that led to personnel difficulties at the political level was even more apparent in the administration's handling of the civil service. The civil service presumably was within the province of the Rockefeller-Flemming-Milton Eisenhower committee during the Commodore period, but the committee had a great many things to deal with and apparently gave relatively little attention to this subject. Eisenhower arrived in Washington with no general policy and no person really responsible for advising him on how to reconcile housecleaning, economy, patronage, and policy control with the requirements of administrative continuity, civil service regulations, his pledge of no reprisals or mass firings, and the dictates of simple justice to individuals.

For several weeks after inauguration, civil service matters largely drifted. The main exception was Brownell's proposal to plan a new loyalty and security program, which was sanctioned by the cabinet. Left to their own devices, some of the new department heads made essentially constructive approaches to staff relations, while others issued statements that seriously damaged employee morale however much they may have pleased anti-bureaucratic Republican congressmen and voters. The Civil Service Commission, ostensibly the President's corporate adviser and policy maker in this field, was not effectively in the picture. The chairmanship was vacant; two Truman holdovers (one Republican and one Democrat) kept the organization going as caretakers, but they were not consulted by the White House.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 215-17.

The commission was not really brought into the administration until the end of March. On March 13, a long search for an available prospect for the chairmanship who would signify probity and managerial excellence ended in the choice of Philip Young, dean of the graduate school of business at Columbia, who had come to Eisenhower's attention during his university presidency.[13] It took another ten days to get Young confirmed and on the job. A few days later the legislative viewpoint was added to the commission by the appointment of George M. Moore, a veteran Republican staff member of congressional committees dealing with civil service matters. The third (Democratic) spot on the commission went to Frederick J. Lawton, who had climbed up and out of the career ranks to become Truman's Director of the Budget. Since inauguration day Lawton had been serving as a consultant to his successor, Joseph Dodge. Along with Young's appointment, Eisenhower announced an upgrading of his job. The Civil Service Commission chairman would also serve as the President's "chief representative and overseer on all civilian personnel matters." He would be "of an importance comparable to that of the Director of the Budget" and would "sit with the Cabinet in any discussion of major personnel problems and policies."[14]

Too Much Civil Service?

Young was brought on the scene none too soon, for concern had been building up rapidly within the new administration about the limited number of places there were in which Eisenhower appointees could put people of their own choice. In some agencies, almost all the positions below the presidential appointee level were in some sort of civil service category, so that a new cabinet or subcabinet official might be able at the start to bring in his own personal secretary, and perhaps

[13] *New York Times* (Mar. 14, 1953). The appointee was identified as the son of retired industrialist (General Electric) Owen D. Young. Philip Young had served in a variety of government administrative posts during the 1930's and 1940's.

[14] White House Press Release (Mar. 23, 1953). A little later the change was made official by an Executive Order (10452, May 2, 1953) abolishing the Liaison Office for Personnel Management in the White House (a mechanism through which one of the President's administrative assistants had previously handled the civil service contacts of the White House) and vesting its functions in the Civil Service Commission chairman. This was generally in accord with recommendations of the first Hoover Commission and other study groups that had sought to involve the President in "positive personnel management." Presumably, it had been suggested by Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on Government Organization.

one special assistant, but that was about all.[15] Demands from within the administration that something be done were echoed by the Republican National Committee, which had at least 10,000 applications for what at first glance appeared to be not more than 1,000 jobs.[16]

But there were supposed to be over 300,000 jobs outside the civil service.[17] Where were they? The 300,000 figure was subject to rapid subtraction when examined with a view to patronage, and to even greater subtraction from the viewpoint of policy control.

To begin with, the agglomerate figure included several thousand positions subject to presidential appointment but in which the President's role was purely nominal, such as the Foreign Service and other special groups. The "real" presidential appointments totaled only about 800.[18] Perhaps half of the 800 were policy making posts of significance, such as cabinet and subcabinet officers, heads of independent agencies, bureau chiefs, and top aides and advisers at that level. The remainder were minor positions in Washington, many of them on miscellaneous boards and commissions of relatively little policy importance, and the traditional field positions still subject to presidential appointment and Senate confirmation: United States attorneys, marshals, collectors of customs, and so forth. The latter appointments, in the normal course of things, would be as much influenced by senators and representatives as by the President.

Below the presidential level, at least 80,000 and perhaps as many as 100,000 jobs were in various special agency merit systems and com-

[15] As most of the Eisenhower appointees later discovered, things were not so bad as they seemed, for in addition to whatever elbowroom could be made through arranging transfers, resignations, and retirements, there was also the possibility of establishing new positions or hiring people in a consultant status for a transitional period. This was the sort of problem on which an experienced personnel officer or administrative assistant secretary could be helpful. But at first glance, there did seem to be little flexibility in many agencies.

[16] The executive committee of the Republican National Committee, meeting in Washington on February 28, devoted much of its session to a discussion of patronage. At that time, the committee office had 10,000-12,000 applications, but only a quarter of them had been "processed," *i.e.,* sorted, tentatively approved, and referred to federal agencies for possible action. *New York Times* (Mar. 1, 1953).

[17] In January 1953, at the request of Congress, the Civil Service Commission tabulated 302,000 positions outside the general merit system, of which 96,000 paid over $4,200 per year. (*S. Doc. 18,* Pt. 1, p. vi; Pt. 2, p. iv.) This did not, however, include certain positions in the FBI, the intelligence services, and miscellaneous part-time, temporary, and seasonal positions that also were exempt. If these had been included the total might have reached 350,000. *Cf. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract . . . 1957,* Table 493, p. 390.

[18] *S. Doc. 18,* Pt. 1, Tables I and II, pp. 1-29.

missioned corps such as the Atomic Energy Commission, the TVA, the Public Health Service, the Government of the District of Columbia, and the medical services of the Veterans Administration. About 150,000 more were overseas employees, technically exempt but actually hard-to-get technicians and recruited almost entirely on a merit basis.

With all these subtracted, there remained somewhere between 50,000 and 70,000 positions exempt from examination either by statute or under Schedules A and B of the Civil Service Commission.[19] This undifferentiated group included many highly technical and nonpolitical positions, some outright political positions, and some on the borderline. Most of the government lawyers were in Schedule A. One student of the civil service has estimated that in the whole service, the number of positions "easily available to the party in power" was probably less than 15,000.[20]

So far as control of the bureaucracy was concerned, the hierarchical location of the posts at the disposal of the administration was more important than the total number. Here the findings of the McKinsey survey were significant: of the 531 most strategic posts in Washington below the presidential appointee level, 271 were fully under civil service, 143 were in Schedule A, and only 117 were completely exempt.[21]

The Schedule A situation was especially confusing. Traditionally, the authority of the agency heads to fill these positions without examination had carried with it almost unlimited power of removal. However, this discretion was now limited in two respects. In the first place, veterans who occupied Schedule A posts had the special protection of the veterans preference laws, which made removal so difficult from a procedural viewpoint as to be almost impossible. In the second place, an Executive Order by President Truman in 1947 had extended protection against removal for political reasons to holders of Schedule A positions who had previously earned regular competitive status before they were promoted (or their jobs were reclassified) into Schedule A.[22] Alto-

[19] Schedule A positions could be filled without examination because, for various reasons, examinations were deemed impractical; Schedule B positions were subject to qualifying but not competitive examinations.

[20] Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 443, estimates that there were perhaps 10,000 policy or patronage positions of some significance, and another 5,000 to 25,000 positions at lower levels subject in some degree to political considerations. *Cf.* Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service*, p. 129.

[21] McKinsey and Co., *op. cit.*

[22] This was a complicated situation. In 1948 Truman had modified his earlier order so that it applied only to non-policy-making posts. However, the Civil Service Com-

gether, well over half of the employees in Schedule A had some sort of removal protection.

Schedule A and Schedule C

Responding to complaints about the limited elbowroom available to his administrators, Eisenhower promised action even before he had appointed Young. On March 5, Hagerty announced that in accordance with the pledge to strengthen the merit system, the President had directed the Civil Service Commission to prepare the necessary orders to revoke Truman's orders extending removal protection to some Schedule A incumbents. Such protections, said the announcement, tended to "undermine the foundations on which a genuine career service should be built," and "may hamper rather than assist our top administrators." The commission and the executive agencies also were directed to reexamine Schedule A to see if any positions should be added to or deleted from it. The contemplated action, Hagerty said, involved "not more than several hundred" positions.[23]

The new order, which came out on April 1, took a somewhat different approach than Eisenhower had originally suggested. It tried to clear up the confusion surrounding Schedule A by establishing a new category of positions, Schedule C, consisting of jobs of a "confidential or policy-determining character" over which the agency head would have almost complete discretion in hiring and firing. The Civil Service Commission promised to take prompt action on requests by agency heads to reclassify positions from the regular merit system, or from Schedules A and B, into Schedule C.[24] If so reclassified, incumbents could be ousted.[25] The announcement was interpreted by some as opening the way to large-scale Republicanization of the upper civil service. Hagerty, in response

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mission had interpreted this broadly, so that a substantial number of incumbents of important posts in Schedule A did have removal insurance. Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service,* pp. 195-96.

[23] White House Press Release 67 (Mar. 5, 1953); *New York Times* (Mar. 6, 1953).

[24] Executive Order 10440 (Mar. 31, 1953) and Civil Service Commission circular, Apr. 1, 1953. The commission took no immediate action on the earlier idea of rescinding Truman's order extending protection to some Schedule A incumbents, presumably because under the new scheme any jobs the administration might need to control would be transferred to Schedule C.

[25] This, at least, was the initial presumption. Later it was established that the new order could not in any way contravene the veterans preference laws, so that it would still be difficult to remove veterans from Schedule C posts.

to questions, hedged on his previous assertion that the administration had designs on not more than several hundred jobs.[26]

The idea of setting up a small, clearly identified group of positions over which the administration in power would have complete discretion in order to achieve its policy purposes could hardly be opposed on principle, even by those who distrusted the administration's motives. The real question was how liberally or narrowly the Civil Service Commission would interpret the phrase "confidential or policy-determining" in reclassifying positions into Schedule C. The department heads, who had the initiative in requesting reclassifications, put considerably different interpretations on it. In the next few months, some agencies requested only a handful of such reclassifications, while other agencies—most notably the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Justice—asked for hundreds.

The commission proceeded cautiously, giving each request for reclassification careful scrutiny. As of August 1953, only a little over 400 positions had been put into Schedule C. The principle of no massive raids on the merit system seemed to be established when the commission pared down the request of the Interior Department for 390 Schedule C jobs to only 86.[27] As of November, there had been 643 approvals out of 1,841 reclassifications requested by the departments.[28] By this time it might have been supposed either that adequate policy control had been achieved or that it was too late to do much good, but the departments continued to press for more Schedule C positions. The total crept upward during 1954, leveling off at something over 1,100 after the 1954 elections.[29]

At first, the commission granted Schedule C classifications only where there was a visible relation to policy control. The Hoover Commission task forced reported:

[26] *New York Times* (Apr. 2, 1953).

[27] The Washington reporters on the "civil service beat" (Jerry Kluttz of the *Post*, John Cramer of the *News*, and Joseph Young of the *Star*) kept a vigilant watch on commission action in this regard and provided almost daily reports on the latest decisions. According to Cramer, Chairman Young took the critical Interior Department decision, which had been decided by a 2-1 vote in the commission, with Commissioner Moore in the minority, to Eisenhower to make sure of presidential backing in this test case. John Cramer, "CSC at Last Draws the Line," *Washington Daily News* (Aug. 31, 1953).

[28] See department-by-department tabulation of number of Schedule C jobs requested and approved, Washington *Sunday Star* (Nov. 1, 1953).

[29] The Civil Service Commission reported a slight net decline from 1,134 to 1,122 Schedule C positions during the first six months of 1955. U. S. Civil Service Commission, news release, Aug. 25, 1955.

> Originally included in Schedule C in substantial numbers were the chiefs and assistant chiefs of bureaus, departmental directors of information, general counsels, heads and assistant heads of substantive staff units (planning and legal staffs in particular), and special aides or assistants to political officers. The heaviest impact . . . was upon positions from the level of assistant bureau chief up to the political officers. . . .[30]

Under this rationale, positions in the field service and in the budget, personnel, and other staff services were kept out of Schedule C. But during 1954 there was some dilution of the original concept. A number of field jobs were included, as well as an increasing number of secretaries and personal assistants to high officials on the ground that they were confidential, if not policy determining.[31] In terms of previous status, the commission reported that out of 1,122 Schedule C positions, 253 previously had been fully competitive, 553 had been in either Schedule A or B, and 336 were new positions.[32]

How much turnover Schedule C actually caused is difficult to say. By the time the department heads had got the positions reclassified, they often found that the men in them were acceptable after all. Many of the positions—probably more than half—continued to be occupied by the incumbents, or by other civil servants promoted into them. The number of persons brought in from outside was relatively small. The effect of Schedule C was to establish a category to which the "political" label was clearly attached in the public mind. A civil servant might still aspire to be a bureau chief or an assistant to an assistant secretary, but he was on notice that he held that particular position at the tolerance of the department head, not by any right under civil service. Whether this constituted a defeat for the merit principle or an essential clarification of it, as the administration claimed, remained controversial.

THE RIF'S

"Now how does the government reduce expenditures? How do you accomplish it? To be absolutely flat about it, 99 per cent of it is ac-

[30] Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service,* p. 191.

[31] As of mid-1955, 460 of the 1,122 Schedule C positions were in grades GS-12 or below, all listed as "confidential." U. S. Civil Service Commission news release, Aug. 25, 1955.

[32] *Ibid.* The number of "new" positions was perhaps slightly inflated. In this period, agency reorganizations were creating many positions that were formally new but which bore strong resemblances to previously existing jobs.

complished by putting people out of work. Now that is a tough way to say it, but it is a fact."

So said Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey to a conference of the nation's governors early in 1954.[33] To federal administrators and civil servants, who had already felt the effects of Humphrey economy, this would not have been news. In the previous months the initials RIF, formerly the personnel technicians' symbol for a layoff, or "reduction in force," had evolved new forms and become a prominent part of the Washington vocabulary.[34]

Federal government employment had hit its Korean War peak in mid-1952 and was already declining slightly in early 1953 when the Eisenhower administration took over. The total at that time was about 2,649,000. Beginning with the freeze on new hiring announced in February and continuing with reorganizations, consolidations, and layoffs of various kinds, Eisenhower cut total personnel by 226,000 during his first year in office. A further reduction of 58,000 was achieved during the second year, bringing the federal service to a low of 2,367,000 early in 1955. Allowing for seasonal fluctuations, employment stabilized at about that level for the next two years before resuming a slight upward trend. Thus, in fulfillment of Republican pledges to economy, the bureaucracy had been cut by about 284,000 employees, or slightly over 10 per cent.[35]

In some respects this was hardly a massive cut, certainly far short of the expectations of many Republicans. Much of it was achieved by not hiring to fill vacancies arising in the normal course of events, so that probably not over 100,000 individuals were directly fired or laid off. The reductions were scattered over the entire federal service, including the defense establishments at home and overseas that had been temporarily expanded for Korea. Positions eliminated in the Washington,

[33] Federal Civil Defense Administration, *A Report on the Washington Conference of Governors,* April 26-28, 1954 (1954), p. 55.

[34] A "rif" was either the layoff action itself or a person who had been "riffed." Helen Hill Miller, "D.P.'s in D.C.: The Riffed and the Miffed," *The Reporter* (Aug. 4, 1953), pp. 27-31.

[35] Statistics in this paragraph from U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract . . .1955,* Table 441, p. 384; *Ibid., 1956,* Table 451, p. 386. These totals include about 26,000 legislative and judicial branch employees not ordinarily counted in Civil Service Commission figures. Because of this and other differences in methods of averaging, inclusion or exclusion of part-time workers, etc., it is not possible completely to reconcile employment figures from the *Statistical Abstract,* the Civil Service Commission annual reports, and the current releases of the commission.

D.C., area itself totaled less than 20,000; actual firings or "rifs" were probably less than half of that number.

Impact on the Service

Nevertheless, a cut of this magnitude in an area so sensitive as Washington to fluctuations in public employment could hardly fail to have a sharp impact. Both because of the layoffs themselves and a number of complicating factors, the efficiency and morale of the federal service—at least in the Washington area—were at a low ebb during 1953 and most of 1954.[36]

For one thing, it was never possible to foresee the ultimate dimensions of the economy program. The budgetary and personnel reductions made in 1953 and 1954 were obviously disappointing to powerful elements, both in Congress and in the administration itself. Despite Philip Young's optimistic statements beginning in the fall of 1953 that the big cuts were over and further reductions would mostly be by attrition, there were enough additional layoffs to prolong the unrest through 1954. With conservative Republicans urging ever-greater economies, no one's job appeared to be safe.

The technicalities of the civil service regulations governing layoffs also made the process cumbersome and in some respects added to the confusion. Personnel recruited under World War II or Korean emergency programs had only "indefinite" as compared to regular civil service appointments and were supposed to be laid off first; war veterans had special protection and were to be last. Defensible as they might be in principle, these requirements led to many apparent inequities in determining who was laid off and sometimes severely restricted the administrators' freedom to retain their most valuable employees.

The procedures had the further effect of threatening the jobs of a far greater number of employees than were actually laid off. Many of the layoffs were related to reorganizations or consolidations of bureaus, divisions or other units. In such cases, the existing organizations and all the jobs in them were technically abolished and the employees all got

[36] A special series of articles in the *Washington Post* in September 1953 led off with the flat assertion: "Federal employee morale is the worst in fifty years." The series cited numerous events that were "having a serious effect on morale and efficiency," creating "fear and anxiety" and a "tense and demoralized" civil service. *Washington Post* (Sept. 20-25, 1953).

dismissal notices. Then the reorganizers would draw from this pool of dismissed employees the ones they wanted to staff the "new" organization. The "bumping" procedure also added to the confusion. In certain circumstances, employees with good civil service standing who were about to be laid off could "bump" others with lower seniority or grade and take their jobs. The person bumped would bump someone else. Cases were reported in which one dismissal started a chain of a half-dozen or more bumps that ended in the departure of an employee far removed from the one who had received the original notice. While this sort of administrative musical chairs went on, no one could be secure, and every office felt the effect of the constant shifting around of personnel.[37]

It was also significant that reductions were being made simultaneously all over the government, and that they coincided with the drying up of private employment opportunities during the 1953-54 recession. There was little new government hiring to absorb riffed employees, and the civilian economy did not absorb them easily. In mid-1953 the Washington area became a surplus labor market, for the first time in a decade.[38] The rifs hit high-ranking executives and specialists as well as the clerical and blue-collar workers, and for many of these who had deep personal commitments to a government career and specialized experience not readily salable elsewhere the problem was serious. Men with long years of service, who had assumed that their careers were secure, were out of jobs for weeks and even months. Some of them eventually got back into the government, but others in the end uprooted their families and left Washington; the government lost the services of many able people whose qualifications it would soon need again. And for several months, genuine fear, reminiscent of depression days, was widespread in the governmental community.

Politics Enters

Finally, politics entered, as it had so many times before, into the economy program. Despite the efforts of the administration to portray it as a strictly managerial matter that would result in a more efficient civil service, the reduction inevitably had a flavor of retribution about it.

[37] The *Washington Post* (July 21, 1953) devoted considerable space to horror stories of bumping, particularly in the State Department. Helen Hill Miller, *op. cit.*, also contains a colorful description.

[38] *Washington Post* (July 20, 1953), based on U. S. Employment Service figures.

Many of the firings and layoffs were handled untactfully, in contrast to pronouncements at upper levels about the administration's high regard for the mass of government employees. Right-wing Republicans, taking obvious delight in evening the score with the detested bureaucracy, shouted for more and more scalps.[39]

There also were strong indications that political factors, in addition to considerations of efficiency and civil service status, in some agencies were playing a part in determining who was let go and who was retained. Employees who had worked on projects or programs that had come under Republican attack, who had worked closely with controversial figures of the previous administration, or who were known to be related to or especially friendly with prominent Democrats, seemed especially subject to layoffs. In some agencies there was a special drive against the planners, the "eggheads," the bright boys who had been chosen by the previous administration for special jobs, advanced training, or rapid advancement.[40] In one well-documented case, where an organization was reduced from 1,300 to 400 employees, special consultants from the business world were allowed to screen the employees to make certain that those being retained did not have "anti-business" attitudes; the personnel officer who handled the paperwork on the reduction in force later told a congressional committee that the lists of employees to be retained and to be let go had been cleared with the Republican National Committee.[41]

The Civil Service Commission intervened in a few cases to enforce fair and orderly layoff procedures, but on the whole the agencies were

[39] Van Riper, borrowing a term from Samuel Lubell, describes the dominant political motives of the period as the "politics of revenge." (Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 485.) One Republican congressman from a district near enough to Washington that he had to be concerned about the civil service vote came up with an interesting if cynical twist: he demanded an investigation to see if the firing of civil servants with 15 to 20 years of service was the work of Fair Deal holdovers attempting to embarrass the Eisenhower administration. *Washington Post* (May 3, 1953).

[40] *Ibid.* (Sept. 23, 1953) cites several examples: secretaries to two of the highest officials in the Acheson regime at the State Department were advised to get out of the government. Two civilian officials who had been selected for unusual special training at the National War College, and a winner of a highly prized Rockefeller Public Service Award, were squeezed out.

[41] This famous case concerned the National Production Authority, a Korean War mobilization agency that was partly dismantled and put under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce during the summer of 1953. (See *WOC's and Government Advisory Groups,* hearings before the House Committee on the Judiciary, 84 Cong. 1 sess., 1956, Pt. 3, pp. 1193-1419.) This case received considerable attention in the newspapers, particularly in the columns of John Cramer in the *Washington Daily News* (July 1-15, 1953).

allowed considerable latitude in interpreting the rules. The new commissioners chose to concentrate on an internal reorganization of the commission staff, careful scrutiny of Schedule C classifications, and miscellaneous managerial improvements rather than on aggressive policing. In the fall of 1953 the commission stepped up its efforts to find new places for career employees who had been riffed.[42] In a few cases it ordered agencies to let out employees with "indefinite" status and make places for displaced civil servants with first class credentials. The commission later was able to report successful replacements of a substantial proportion of those fully qualified who had applied for this service.[43] Nevertheless, the slowness with which this program operated, and the narrow definition of who was eligible for its services (many civil servants with several years of service were for technical reasons still classed as "indefinites" and thus ineligible) made it appear in the context of 1953 and 1954 as an inadequate solution to a serious problem.

LOYALTY, SECURITY, AND McCARTHYISM

Political firings and civil service reductions in force led to confusion and disaffection enough, but these were compounded by another ingredient—a new program to ensure the loyalty and security of federal employees. Carried out amidst the social and political hysteria that has come to be known as McCarthyism, the security effort became entangled with everything from routine personnel administration to the high-level politics of the Eisenhower regime. It contributed greatly to the resentment and unrest in the civil service during 1953 and 1954.

A Vacuum in the Administration

Early action by the Eisenhower administration in the field of employee loyalty and security was imperative. The Republicans had been

[42] This action apparently was prompted in part by complaints from the civil service unions and a vociferous *ad hoc* organization, the Federal Civil Service Career Employees Association. *Washington Post* (Sept. 1, Sept. 9, Oct. 8, 1953).

[43] In the year ending June 30, 1954, the commission reported that in the Washington area it had placed 3,825 out of 4,911 eligible displaced career workers. In the field, 2,591 out of 7,411 applicants were placed. In the 1955 fiscal year, the commission received 3,347 new applications for replacement and placed 4,278—some carried over from the previous year. As of mid-1955, there were only a few active cases still unplaced. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1954; ibid., 1955.*

charging for years that Truman's efforts were inadequate, and many of the new administrators were sincerely worried that their agencies might be harboring spies or subversives, not to mention "alcoholics, sex perverts, and blabbermouths," as the phrase of the day put it. Whatever the actual situation, something had to be done to restore public and legislative confidence.

The cabinet discussed this subject at one of its first meetings, which resulted in instructions to Attorney General Brownell to prepare an order that would install a new system. A few days later Eisenhower announced in his State of the Union address that this was being done and asserted the principle of executive responsibility for personnel security. Within forty-eight hours, congressmen who had been consulted by Brownell and his aides were leaking what purported to be the details of the new program and predicting almost immediate action. This, however, was just the beginning, for Brownell had yet to consult the security officers of the various executive agencies. Nor had he consulted the chairman of the Loyalty Review Board (a former Republican senator), nor a Civil Service Commission working group which, under President Truman's instructions, had been studying plans for a revision of the loyalty setup since the previous August.[44] Although the administration's general approach was in some respects along lines widely agreed on by those who had been studying the subject, there were other aspects which turned out to be controversial. Every week brought new reports that the revised program was on the verge of announcement, but it took ninety days to get everyone together. Meanwhile, as Walter Lippmann noted, the existing system was a "lame duck," and there was "a vacuum in the administration which invites the intervention of Senator McCarthy."[45]

It did not require Mr. Lippmann to point this out to the Senator. McCarthy was already moving into the vacuum with his activities on the Bohlen nomination and his investigation of the Voice of America. Meanwhile, the much-applauded principle of executive responsibility for personnel security had been subordinated to Eisenhower's other principle of getting along with Congress by cooperating in investigations. Members of the administration remained silent while McCarthy

[44] Murrey Marder, "Ike to Order New Loyalty Check Setup," *Washington Post* (Feb. 4, 1953).

[45] Walter Lippmann, "The Administration and Senator McCarthy," *Washington Post* (Mar. 12, 1953).

boasted of his "loyal American underground" in the State Department. Some of the actions the administration officials did take were not particularly helpful. Joseph Dodge, for example, circulated to Budget Bureau employees a memorandum asserting:

> One of the fundamental obligations of each member of the Bureau staff is to protect himself and the rest of the organization against the development and existence of any situation within the Bureau which is in conflict with law or regulation or which is inimical to the effective operation, security, and standing of the whole group. . . .
>
> Any member of the staff who has well-founded information indicating that a continuation of an existing course of action is illegal, improper or detrimental to the interests of the organization is expected and instructed to report this to [the personnel officer]. . . .[46]

The memorandum went on to say that "this is not an invitation for snooping or gossiping," but it was widely construed as just that, both inside the bureau and all over the government. While there was some debate about how serious it was, there was little doubt that such events, coupled with the announcement of Schedule C, the Astin firing, and the beginning of the reductions in force, were causing a precipitous drop in employee efficiency and morale, particularly in the foreign affairs agencies.[47]

The New Program

Eisenhower announced the new security program on April 27. In one important respect, it embraced the conclusion to which the Truman administration had come the year before—namely, that for the previous three separate procedures for dismissing employees on grounds of loyalty, security, and suitablity, there should be substituted "a single general program covering eligibility for employment."[48] The new program was to be based on a statute of 1950, authorizing summary dismissals on security grounds, which previously had been applied only to the State Department and a few other sensitive agencies. Now the entire government was in effect declared sensitive, and agency heads were

[46] U. S. Bureau of the Budget, Office Memorandum No. 380 (mimeo., Feb. 26, 1953).

[47] For a roundup conveying the flavor of the time, see W. H. Lawrence, "Letdown in Morale of Aides found to Weaken U. S. Policy," and " 'Cold War' Staffs Riddled in Morale" *New York Times* (Apr. 13 and 14, 1953).

[48] Harry S. Truman, letter to the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, and attached Report of Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security (White House Press Release, Aug. 6, 1952).

authorized to dismiss any employees whose retention was "not clearly consistent with the interests of the national security." The suggested criteria for this decision included not only the familiar items of subversive actions and associations but a wide range of factors relating to personal conduct—addiction to drugs or alcohol, sex perversion, mental disorders, misrepresentations or falsifications, "any facts which furnish reason to believe that the individual may be subjected to coercion, influence, or pressure," and "any behavior, activities, or associations which tend to show that the individual is not reliable or trustworthy." Employees brought up on security charges who demanded hearings could have their cases heard by panels of federal officials chosen from other agencies (not from their own agencies as in the old program) prior to decision by the agency head. In another significant departure from the old program, the decision of the agency head was to be final; the central Loyalty Review Board, which had formerly heard appeals from agency decisions, was abolished.[49] It was debate on this last point that had held up promulgation of the order for so long.

Attorney General Brownell held an hour-long press conference at the White House and asserted that the new program was a great step forward. There would be no more passing the buck between department heads and the Loyalty Review Board; it would now be possible to get rid of undesirable employees without adducing evidence of disloyalty or stigmatizing them as such before the outside world.[50] The lack of an appeals procedure was immediately criticized, however, as well as the failure to remedy what had been considered by some a defect of the previous system—the absence of any guarantee that an accused employee could confront or cross-examine his accusers.[51] The *Post* warned editorially against succumbing to the temptation to use the security shortcut to get rid of personnel for partisan reasons or for inefficiency.[52]

Impact of the Program

The result, in the short run at least, was more confusion than ever. Although the new program theoretically went into effect thirty days after

[49] Executive Order 10450 (Apr. 27, 1953).

[50] *New York Times* (Apr. 28, 1953).

[51] ". . . It's just not the American way of doing things," said elderly Hiram Bingham, Chairman of the Loyalty Review Board, a former Republican senator. *Washington Post* (May 1, 1953). *Cf.,* George W. Ball, "Letter to the Editor," *Ibid.* (May 5, 1953).

[52] *Ibid.* (Apr. 30, 1953).

it was announced, it took weeks—sometimes months—for the agencies to set up their procedures for processing cases under the new executive order and related Department of Justice instructions.[53] Meanwhile a tremendous log jam developed on appointments, as agency security offices subjected each proposed appointment—and sometimes each internal promotion or transfer—to close scrutiny; some agencies were requiring full field investigations for virtually all appointments. It took sometimes as long as six months to process and clear a routine civil service appointment. High-level appointees were given the same treatment, and there were several embarrassing cases in which the security procedures held up the consummation of previously announced presidential appointments.[54]

The new program subjected not only new appointees but all existing employees to re-examination on the basis of the widened criteria. Many of the old cases of individuals who had previously been brought before loyalty boards and cleared—some of them two or three times—were reopened again. Others who had never been suspected of disloyalty were haled before the security officers on charges relating to personal associations or habits, sometimes involving incidents many years in the past; some employees found themselves classified as security risks because of alleged communist associations of their parents, or because they had relatives living behind the Iron Curtain. Many employees chose to resign rather than fight security charges; the security officers usually encouraged them to do so, and this was sometimes the easiest way out for those who feared publicity.[55] Those who chose to fight often were under suspension for months until the hearing panels (which many agencies were slow in setting up) could get to their cases and the department heads could finally decide them. Some unfortunate souls in-

[53] A survey by the *Washington Post* in October showed that the program was "barely beginning to function on a Government-wide basis," and that it would take "a minimum of six months to a year even to get the program on a current basis." Murrey Marder, "U. S. Employee Security Setup Still Just Getting Under Way," *Ibid.* (Oct. 4, 1953).

[54] Perhaps the outstanding case was that of Mrs. Mildred MacAfee Horton, former president of Wellesley College and wartime commander of the WAVES, who was unable to attend a United Nations meeting to which she had been designated a delegate because the State Department security office had not completed its investigation. *New York Times* (May 27, 1953).

[55] As late as November, Scott McLeod said that 306 citizen employees and 178 aliens had left the State Department on security charges, but it had not yet been necessary to hold a single hearing. *Ibid.* (Nov. 25, 1953).

advertently resigned or were riffed while under investigation, thus becoming virtually unemployable without realizing it. They made the rounds of the personnel offices for months, looking for jobs but getting only evasive answers because the regulations forbade anyone to tell them that they were suspect.

It would appear that the new regime of more complete investigations and broader criteria for dismissal led to the departure of many employees who were no credit to the service. However, the procedural delays in the system, the wide latitude allowed the separate agencies, and the general atmosphere of fear and repression in which the program was carried out led to widespread unrest among employees and sometimes swept out the good along with the bad. By the autumn of 1953, the operation of the security program was under heavy criticism by friends of the civil service and others who took a generally libertarian approach to such matters, including many partisan supporters of the administration.[56]

The Numbers Game

Now on the defensive, the administration decided, after discussion in the cabinet, to make some reports to show the public what was being accomplished.[57] On October 23, the White House announced that since the program had gone into effect, 1,456 employees had been separated for security reasons. Of these, 863 had been dismissed, and 593 had resigned after unfavorable reports. All but five, it was said, had been hired by previous administrations.[58]

This touched off a controversy that raged for a year. The figure 1,456 was immediately picked up by supporters of the administration and used as the number of "spies and subversives" cleaned out of the government. Challenged on this point, the administration admitted that many of these had nothing subversive in their records but had been discharged

[56] One of the best contemporary accounts of the looseness of the charges, the procedural injustices, and the general spirit of repression and "supersecurity" in which the program was carried out was the series of articles by Anthony Lewis, beginning "Injustices Creep Into U. S. Security Program," *Washington Daily News* (Dec. 21, 1953) and continuing intermittently for the next several weeks. This series won Lewis a Pulitzer prize.

[57] "Nixon argued that public reports were necessary because the issue was one that had given the people concern in the 1952 election." Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

[58] White House Press Release, Oct. 23, 1953; *New York Times* (Oct. 24, 1953).

for other reasons indicating untrustworthiness. However, it was at first impossible to get a breakdown of the various categories of security risks.[59] And although the administration's initial announcement asserted that the 1,456 firings had had "nothing to do" with reductions in force, a supplementary statement by the Navy a little later indicated that some of the 192 security risks eliminated from that department "were separated through resignation or reduction in force prior to the final processing of derogatory information."[60] A Navy spokesman admitted, when questioned by reporters, that some of the people had left their jobs without knowing that they were suspected—in fact derogatory information had not turned up on some of them until after they had gone.[61] Further inquiry by reporters at other agencies showed numerous other gaps and inconsistencies in the tabulations, substantially riddling the administration's claim.[62]

Nevertheless, administration supporters, including members of the cabinet and the White House staff, continued to talk of 1,400 "subversives" or "communists" who had been eliminated. Eisenhower, in his January 1954 State of the Union message, raised the figure to 2,200. New administration statements during the spring showed a steadily rising total, as the program worked through the backlog of employees who had to be re-evaluated. Critical reporters continued to question these figures, and Democrats on the appropriations subcommittees had a field day with administration witnesses.[63] Later in the spring, the Civil Service Commission got the figures into better order. As of June 30, 1954, a total of 6,926 security risks had been eliminated. Of these, 2,611 had been terminated officially under the program, while 4,315 had "resigned before determination was completed in cases where the file was known to contain unfavorable information." A rough breakdown of the nature of the charges showed that 1,743 were suspected "in varying degrees" of subversive activities or associations, 618 were charged with sex perversion, 2,272 had records of felony or misde-

[59] See report on Eisenhower press conference, *Washington Post* (Dec. 17, 1953).

[60] Department of Defense press release 1155-53 (Dec. 7, 1953).

[61] L. Edgar Prina, "Navy Security Risks Are Fired Without Hint of Adverse Data," Washington *Evening Star* (Dec. 8, 1953).

[62] For Senate debate on this point, in the course of which a number of revealing newspaper stories were introduced into the record, see *Congressional Record,* Vol. 100, Pt. 1 (Jan. 25, 1954), pp. 680-93.

[63] For critical comments on "The Numbers Game" and some choice excerpts from committee hearings, see extensions of remarks of Rep. Samuel W. Yorty *Ibid.* Vol. 100, Pt. 9, pp. 12117-28.

meanor, and 3,657 were in an "all other" category.[64] By the autumn of 1954, the purge was pretty well over, and the reports of "risks" eliminated showed only a slowly rising cumulative total thereafter.[65] While Donovan indicates that the vagueness of the standards for judging security risks and the recriminations of the "numbers game" gave rise to much uneasiness in the administration and stimulated several cabinet discussions during 1954,[66] this controversy, like so many others in which the administration was engaged, was allowed to burn itself out rather than brought to a decisive end.

Security in the Extreme

Meanwhile the controversy over communism in government had far transcended the details of the employee security program. The period from November 1953 to approximately the end of 1954 brought a series of dramatic events that need but brief mention here. Altogether, it was a critical year of transition in the administration's approach to the security problem, in its relations with the Republican right wing and Senator McCarthy, and in the nationwide—indeed world-wide—agitation of which McCarthy was the center and symbol.

On November 6, 1953, only a few days after the administration started the "numbers game" controversy by releasing from the White House the figures on security firings, Attorney General Brownell made his celebrated charge that President Truman had permitted Harry Dexter White to remain in the government although he knew he was a communist spy. Eisenhower knew in advance that Brownell was going to make the statement, although whether he realized the implications of it, and the motivation, remain controversial and obscure.[67] In any case,

[64] Some of the "risks" were counted in more than one category. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1954,* p. 135.

[65] Between June 30 and September 30, 1954, the total rose from 6,926 to 8,008; as of September 30, 1955, it was 9,605. See U. S. Civil Service Commission, "Third Consolidated Report on Agency Operations Under the Federal Employee Security Program" (mimeo., Jan. 5, 1955), and "Fifth Consolidated Report on Agency Operations Under the Federal Employee Security Program" (mimeo., no date)

[66] Donovan, *op. cit.,* pp. 288-94.

[67] Critics of the administration saw in this and other actions about that time a cynical attempt to make political capital out of the security question. In general the administration denied this but took the position that it had been elected on a pledge to straighten out the security situation, which gave it an obligation to report the conditions it had found and the steps taken. Donovan, *op. cit.,* pp. 177-79, stresses the "background of conciliation and pacification" created by Eisenhower's previous personal avoidance of

the affair quickly got out of hand. The House Un-American Activities Committee made an abortive effort to subpoena Mr. Truman. The next day, in what James Reston described as "one of the stormiest White House news conferences of recent years," Eisenhower denied that Truman's loyalty had been impugned and asserted that it was inconceivable to him that Truman had knowingly done anything that would damage the United States.[68] But neither did he repudiate Brownell.

The latter soon went before a Senate committee, taking J. Edgar Hoover along, to explain his side of the controversy. Truman made a TV and radio address defending himself and criticizing the administration for engaging in McCarthyism. McCarthy jumped in, got TV and radio time to defend himself against Truman, and used it to attack Eisenhower and the State Department for not being tough enough on communism and Red China. This insult, coming on top of so many others from McCarthy, resulted in heavy debates in the White House staff whether or not this was the moment for Eisenhower to forego restraint and blast McCarthy directly. But when pressed to do so by C. D. Jackson and others, the President said angrily, "I will not get in the gutter with that guy," and made a mild statement that avoided mentioning the Senator's name.[69] McCarthy's response was an insolent direct invitation to the public to bring pressure on the White House on the communism issue.

Although it did not become public knowledge until much later, it appeared that on the same day that he refused to get in the gutter with McCarthy (December 3), Eisenhower made a decision that started the administration down another tortuous road toward security. On the basis of information brought to his attention by the Justice and Defense departments and the Atomic Energy Commission, he ordered the erection of a "blank wall" between the nation's secrets and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer.[70] After protracted hearings, a special personnel board recommended by a 2-1 vote that Oppenheimer's clearance be revoked. The decision was affirmed by a 4-1 vote of the AEC in July 1954.

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partisan arguments and indicates that the President was "surprised and upset" by the reaction to the Brownell speech. But Douglass Cater, *The Fourth Branch of Government* (1959), pp. 158-60, cites evidence of well-laid plans by members of the administration and the Republican National Committee to maximize the publicity impact of the Brownell statement.

[68] *New York Times* (Nov. 12, 1953).

[69] Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

Meanwhile, events leading to the climax of McCarthyism had been set in motion. They began with the dispute between McCarthy and the Army in January and February of 1954, over the fixing of responsibility for the handing of the case of the "Fifth Amendment dentist," Major Peress. Painfully and reluctantly, the administration pulled itself into a position of defense. On March 3, Eisenhower made a press conference statement acknowledging that the Army had erred in the Peress case but praising General Zwicker, who had incurred McCarthy's wrath, and asserting that the executive branch would insist on fair treatment of its witnesses by investigating bodies. He backed this up with a confidential memorandum to the cabinet two days later. On March 11, the Army, with at least the tacit permission of Sherman Adams, released a report on the interventions of McCarthy and his aide, Roy Cohn, on behalf of their drafted former colleague, David Schine. This precipitated the fantastic thirty-six days of televised hearings that eventually put a slow leak in the McCarthy balloon. During this affair and the subsequent movement in the Senate to censure McCarthy, the administration gave quiet support to those against McCarthy. Eisenhower himself, however, although plainly exhibiting disdain for the Senator, continued to avoid direct comment, justifying this position in private by asserting that it would be unwise to dignify McCarthy with presidential attention and possibly make a martyr out of him.

The peak of partisan dispute over communism and security was reached that autumn in the controversy over Vice President Nixon's use of this issue in the mid-term congressional campaign. After the election, in December, the Senate met in special session and voted to censure McCarthy, and in the Congress that met in January 1955, he was stripped of his committee chairmanship by virtue of the new Democratic majority.

The Passion Cools

By this time the passion for employee security was beginning to cool a little. An early sign of returning moderation had come in September 1954 with the Navy's reinstatement and confession of error in its handling of the case of Abraham Chasanow, who had been dismissed on flimsy charges. There was a flareup of controversy in November, when Secretary Dulles liquidated the last of the original McCarthy cases by

firing Foreign Service Officer John Paton Davies, Jr. But shortly after that came the case of Wolf I. Ladejinsky, a foreign-born agricultural expert with a distinguished record of service overseas under the jurisdiction of the State Department, who was rejected by Secretary Benson when he and his work were transferred to the Department of Agriculture. The whole security system was made to look a little ridiculous when Harold Stassen promptly hired Ladejinsky for the Foreign Operations Agency. The merits were not so clear-cut, but the publicity on the Army's handling of the case of Annie Lee Moss, which reached a climax in January 1955 about the same time as the Ladejinsky affair, tended to bring the security program further into disrepute.

While there was no sharp change in the administration's attitude, completion of the massive job of re-checking the entire bureaucracy, McCarthy's fall from power, and the return of a Democratic majority to Congress all contributed to an atmosphere in which it was possible for the administration to improve its procedures and ease tensions over the security question during 1955.

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE PATRONAGE

The establishment of civil service Schedule C in March 1953 provided an answer in principle to the problem of where to draw the line between political and career appointees, and seemed to have a reassuring effect on the new departmental administrators who had been worrying about being able to control policy. Cabinet and subcabinet officers continued to complain about the Civil Service Commission's stinginess with Schedule C classifications and the general restrictiveness of the regulations, but as they gained confidence in their career staffs, learned how to live with the regulations, and experienced the difficulties of political recruitment, the complaints lost their edge.

Nevertheless, the opportunities opened up by Schedule C, plus minor adjustments in the postmaster situation, were a far from adequate response to the pent-up demand of Republican congressmen and party officials for patronage.[71] During the second half of 1953 and most of

[71] Although patronage opportunities in the Post Office had diminished sharply over the years, a new administration could still find things to do. As of 1953, postmasters were appointed after competitive examinations, and for indefinite terms, thus putting them on a quasi-merit basis. However, certification under the rule of three and the

1954, patronage was a headache for the administration, and its handling of the subject added further to the employee unrest created by the reduction in force and security programs. While neither the pressure for nor the actual concessions to patronage were as great as those in 1933, for example, the conduct of the administration was a disappointment to those who felt that the federal government had long ago outgrown the need for such indulgences.

Expanding the Patronage Area

In April 1953, Leonard W. Hall, a former congressman from New York, took over as Chairman of the Republican National Committee.[72] He immediately began to press for greater influence over appointments and an enlargement of the number of political jobs, in the interest of strengthening the party organization and improving prospects for the congressional elections of 1954.

For the next several months, the administration wrestled inconclusively with the patronage problem. The President recognized that Hall's claims had some basis and was willing to see the patronage machinery at the national committee expanded, particularly if it would take some of the pressure off the White House. He disliked being bothered about patronage questions himself. However, his idea of cooperating with Hall was mainly to give the national committee opportunities to make recommendations for jobs falling legitimately in the political area. He cautioned against a wholesale spoils system. The agency heads were in varying degree disposed to cooperate with Hall but clearly were unwilling to let him control the jobs, particularly at the upper levels, and the President backed them in this. Hall aspired to become the supreme arbiter of patronage claims, but the Commodore Agreement had promised

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continuing requirement of Senate confirmation made political clearance and other manipulations the informal practice and kept about 50,000 postmasters and rural mail carriers substantially under the control of the appointing party. Persons belonging to the minority party generally did not bother to compete. (See Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 442; Second Hoover Commission. *Personnel and Civil Service*, pp. 133-35.) On March 24, 1953, the Civil Service Commission and the Post Office jointly announced that the eligible lists for about 1,700 postmaster vacancies had been canceled and that new examinations with "higher standards of eligibility" would be given. Thus in the course of strengthening the merit system some new opportunities could be made for Republican competitors. *Washington Post* (Mar. 25, 1953).

[72] His predecessor, Wesley Roberts, had been forced out after holding the office only two months, following charges of improper use of political position for personal gain in his home state.

the congressmen direct access to the departmental appointing officers. In the end, Sherman Adams insisted that the function of overseeing appointments, protecting the department heads from undue pressure from Congress, and umpiring disputes over patronage could be performed only under his supervision at the White House. Steps were taken to facilitate communication between the national committee and the departments with respect to vacancies and possible candidates, but Hall and the constellation of state and local party organizations for which he spoke remained essentially just one of several interests competing for the available positions.[73]

However, partly in response to party pressure and partly at the initiative of the agency heads themselves, the number of appointments subject to political influence was enlarged at the expense of the civil service. The most massive assault on the merit system failed when the House turned down by a narrow margin an appropriation rider that would have given the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce unlimited temporary authority to fire any employee.[74] The Senate a few weeks later turned down a similar rider that would have granted this authority only over employees outside the competitive civil service—in other words removing veterans preference and other protections given by President Truman's executive orders to former competitive employees in the exempt categories.[75]

The administration now moved to accomplish part of this objective by executive action. On June 25, the President in effect canceled the Truman orders of 1947 and 1948 insofar as they applied to Schedules A, C, and other positions exempt by statute. The administration now had full authority to fire employees in Schedules A and C who were not veterans; former competitive employees in Schedule B, and veterans in any schedule, still had protection.[76] The immediate effect was to expose a large proportion of the government's lawyers, many of whom had been recruited under merit procedures but ended up in jobs in the in-between category. Armed with this additional authority, Attorney General

[73] *New York Times* (May 7, 24, 1953); Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-100; Wilder, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-14; Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

[74] *New York Times* (May 6, 1953).

[75] *Washington Post* (June 4, 1953). See above, pp. 654-55.

[76] Executive Order 10463, June 25, 1953; U. S. Civil Service Commission, Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1953, p. 64; Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service*, p. 196. Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 497, comments that in recommending this, the Civil Service Commission "came perhaps as close as any time in its history at conniving at a patronage grab."

Brownell completed a process already started and gave the Department of Justice what was described as the "greatest shake-up in its history." As of early August he had fired 124 attorneys in the Washington headquarters alone.[77]

Nevertheless, the patronage still flowed slowly. The Civil Service Commission was cautious with Schedule C classifications, the government was reducing its total force, and the jobs available to political appointment were few in comparison to the alleged demand. By fall of 1953 party circles were restless, and a number of congressmen had convinced themselves of the existence of a ground swell of popular resentment because the administration had not fired more Democrats and hired more Republicans. There was a wave of pressure on the White House and the Civil Service Commission to do something. One Midwestern congressman demanded Philip Young's scalp. Hall told the White House he needed 25,000 jobs.[78]

This continual hammering gradually produced results. The departments brought more pressure to enlarge the exempt categories, and the Civil Service Commission slowly gave way. As already noted, the commission almost doubled the number of Schedule C classifications during 1954. The departments also sought to widen the loophole opened by Eisenhower's cancellation of removal protection to Schedule A by enlarging that category. During 1954 the commission consented to the reclassification of several hundred jobs into Schedule A, many of them high positions in the field service and jobs in management, information, and security staffs that the commission previously had refused to put into Schedule C. This expansion of Schedules A and C, according to the Hoover Commission task force, "blurred the distinction between the two schedules and created doubt as to the intent and appropriateness of the inclusions." While the number of positions affected was not large in proportion to the entire civil service, the importance of the positions af-

[77] *Washington Post* (Aug. 9, 1953).

[78] Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 100. Some typical newspaper stories of the period: "Woeful Republicans Sing Patronage Blues as Jobs Fail to Show," Washington *Evening Star* (Aug. 16, 1953); "Democrats in Policy Jobs Get Warning," *Washington Post* (Oct. 26, 1953); "Republican Assails Civil Service Chief," *New York Times* (Nov. 11, 1953); "Halleck Attacks Hold-Over Aides," *Ibid.* (Nov. 22, 1953); "Ike Aides Urge CS to Change Job Handling, Seek More Posts for Republicans," *Washington Times-Herald* (Nov. 24, 1953). Even Civil Service Commissioner Moore joined the chorus, charging that many holdovers were "engaged in political activity and . . . sabotaging . . . the administration." See John Cramer, "CSC Member Charges Sabotage," *Washington Daily News* (Dec. 16, 1953).

fected was said to make this "the most significant cut-back of the competitive service in history."[79]

The administration also took action in late 1953 and early 1954 to improve its procedures to make the most of the available patronage. There had been a number of complaints that career personnel officers in the agencies—which the Civil Service Commission had refused to put into Schedule C—were engaging in "personal patronage" (giving jobs to their friends) and refusing to cooperate with the congressmen and the national committee. To remove this objection, Eisenhower encouraged the agency heads to appoint special assistants to handle patronage matters and make sure that opportunities to make political placements were not overlooked.[80]

The Willis Plan

In the spring of 1954, with a campaign coming up and congressmen and party officials still complaining bitterly about the limited amount of patronage, the administration took further steps to ease the discontent and increase political placements. Charles F. Willis, Jr., who labored at the White House under the title of Assistant to The Assistant to the President, promulgated an elaborate plan called "Operation People's Mandate," which established standard procedures and forms for the agency patronage assistants to use in inventorying potential patronage positions and for the agencies, the national committee, congressmen, and party officials to use in communicating with each other about vacancies and

[79] Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service,* p. 192.

Part of the motive for expanding Schedule A was removed late in 1954 when the federal courts restored to duty one of the lawyers who had protested his removal after Eisenhower's executive order of June 25. The gist of the ruling was that the transfer of an employee and his job from the competitive service to an exempt category did not permit the administration to remove him summarily in disregard of the procedures specified in the Lloyd-LaFollette act. (*Roth* v. *Brownell,* Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, 1954, 215 F. 2nd, 500.) In response to this, the commission adjusted its regulations so that competitive employees transferred together with their jobs into exempt categories retained their removal protection, but employees accepting new appointments in those categories left their status behind them. For a summary of the Roth case, see Second Hoover Commission, *Personnel and Civil Service,* pp. 196-97.

[80] Donovan, *op. cit.,* p. 100; Jerry Kluttz, "Top Agency Aides to Run Patronage," *Washington Post* (Dec. 21, 1953). From the beginning, of course, an official in each agency had been designated as the patronage contact point, but it had usually been someone with broader responsibilities who was in a position to evaluate patronage claims in terms of the requirements of running the agency. The introduction of officials whose main duties were to maximize the number of patronage placements was a different matter.

possible candidates.[81] The plan was to cover not only Schedule C and other exempt positions but provided for establishing "control" and re-evaluating the incumbents of all key positions in pay grades GS-14 to GS-18 regardless of competitive status. Willis' directive was of course confidential within the administration, but rumors of it soon began to circulate around Washington; there was ample evidence of a widespread patronage drive during the summer of 1954.[82]

The new scheme was not universally popular within the administration. Many agencies found it difficult to find satisfactory employees through the patronage route. The Department of Defense virtually refused to cooperate, except with respect to the exempt positions. But other agencies far exceeded the requirement of the Willis order and established political control of jobs far down in the civil service ranks. Perhaps seeking to gain the confidence of hostile Republican congressmen, the Foreign Operations Administration was among the most notorious in this respect, requiring political clearance for the appointment and promotion even of clerical employees. The civil service columnists reported new outrages almost daily and blasted away at the Civil Service Commission for failing to stamp out these practices.

Civil Service Commission Activity

During the early part of 1954, while the patronage pressure was most intense, Civil Service Commission Chairman Philip Young—apparently sincerely devoted to the merit system—could take only mitigating, defensive action. He did, however, make headway in several other areas that benefited the service as a whole and partially counteracted the adverse effects of patronage, reductions in force, and the loyalty-security program. He succeeded in getting Congress to authorize a group life insurance program for federal employees, and other fringe benefits in-

[81] At first glance, the Willis plan appeared the work of an efficiency expert gone berserk. In addition to elaborate written instructions, it included some eight standardized forms, a complicated flow chart, and a set of sheets apparently intended for use in briefing presentations—the latter complete with sketches of arrows hitting targets and bristling with phrases like "dynamic implementation," "continuing and productive exploration of the sources of position supply," and "Republican, business-like personnel management." A description of the plan, together with some of the charts and diagrams, is in the report of James R. Watson, consultant, in U. S. Senate Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, *Administration of the Civil Service System,* Committee Print, 85 Cong., 1 sess. (1957), pp. 28-33, 85-144.

[82] For example, see Jerry Kluttz in the *Washington Post* (June 13 and 14, July 19, August 1, 1953).

cluding unemployment insurance coverage. In 1954 Congress also was persuaded to amend previous restrictions on permanent appointments and promotions that had kept 34 per cent of the service in an unsatisfactory "indefinite" status.[83]

In August 1954, his position strengthened by outside criticism of the reversion to patronage, Young succeeded in slowing the patronage drive. It was reported that the White House had modified the Willis directive so that it no longer applied to competitive positions.[84] Then the civil service problem was put on the cabinet agenda for August 13, which resulted in an affirmation of the principle that the merit system would be respected. A copy of the policy paper approved by the cabinet found its way into the newspapers a few weeks later.[85]

Late in October, the *Washington Post* secured and printed the entire text of the Willis directive. This caused another uproar. Eisenhower insisted at a press conference that there was no political favoritism in civil service recruiting; the disputed order was only an effort to get more and better people to apply. Four days later—the day before election—the Civil Service Commission released the text of a "Dear Phil" letter, dated August 20, in which the President quoted from the 1952 Republican platform, reiterated his concern for protecting the civil service from "any encroachment of politics—personal or party," urged "continued positive use of the Civil Service Commission's Inspection staff," and assured Young of "his full support and backing."[86]

Eisenhower's reassertion of devotion to the merit system did not produce any startling changes in the administration's practice, but agitation over patronage and the civil service gradually declined thereafter. Republican congressmen continued to complain about not enough patronage, but there were few additional removals of positions from the merit system to the exempt categories. Friends of the civil service, however, were dissatisfied because the Willis directive remained in effect, and political clearance of appointments to civil service jobs continued to be the unofficial practice in some agencies.[87]

[83] Pursuant to this, an improved system of "career" and "career-conditional" appointments was established early in 1955. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1954; ibid., 1955.* Carrying forward the managerial improvements begun the previous year, 1955 brought a general civil service pay increase, extension of the competitive service overseas, and a strengthening of the examining and training programs.

[84] *Washington Post* (Aug. 3, 1954).

[85] *Ibid.* (Sept. 24, 1954).

[86] U. S. Civil Service Commission, news release, Nov. 1, 1954.

[87] The writer can testify from personal experience that negotiations in late 1955 with

The impact of the Republican patronage thrust is impossible to assess precisely, either in quantitative or qualitative terms. The official statistics showed a decline of only two or three percentage points in the proportion of employees under the merit system.[88] According to Donovan, the White House office estimated in late 1955 that it had "processed" about 70,000 political appointments—a reasonable figure in terms of the number of presidential and exempt positions.[89] However, these statistics do not seem to reflect the political clearances that were required in some agencies for appointments in the regular civil service. The amount of patronage taken was perhaps modest in comparison to the total number of federal employees, or in view of the long Republican absence from power. It was, however, far in excess of the bureaucracy's expectation based on the practice of the immediately preceding years.

It should perhaps be recorded that the assumption of control by the Republicans was not such a uniformly painful process for all sectors of the bureaucracy as the preceding account, which stresses the over-all view, might suggest. There were some agencies—the Bureau of the Budget was probably the most notable—where any early suspicions were quickly dissipated, new and old officials established effective communication, and the bureaucracy's talents were fully employed in the reorientation of policy desired by the new administration. An agency by agency survey might disclose a number of such situations. Within two years it was common to hear Republican appointees who had initially been suspicious and hostile paying tribute to the ability and devotion of the civil service.

But the areas of calm were not large enough to dominate the entire government. The cumulative effect of the Republican search for policy control, the reductions in force, the stringent security program, the sustained search for patronage, and the administration's passive acceptance

certain agency officials in Washington about a possible appointment from a civil service register soon led to inquiries by party officials in his home town in the Midwest. Jerry Kluttz reported early in 1958 that a new director of the International Cooperation Administration, successor to the Foreign Operations Administration, had discovered and finally taken positive steps to eliminate the remains of the political clearance system established by Stassen in 1953. Jerry Kluttz, "ICA Takes Steps To End Political Job Clearance," *Washington Post* (Mar. 17, 1958).

[88] The tabulation in the *Statistical Abstract* shows a decline from 86 per cent in 1952 to 83 per cent in 1954, and a gradual rise thereafter, reaching 86 per cent again in the middle of Eisenhower's second term. (U. S. Bureau of the Census *Statistical Abstract . . . 1959,* Table 493, p. 390). The figures of the Civil Service Commission, compiled on a slightly different basis, show a low of 84 per cent in mid-1955. U. S. Civil Service Commission, *Annual Report . . . 1955,* p. 172.

[89] Donovan, *op. cit.,* p. 101. *Cf.* above in this chapter, p. 46; Van Riper, *op. cit.,*

of legislative intervention in its internal affairs was extremely adverse. Morale suffered, the quality of work suffered, and individuals suffered —just how much can never be known. Twenty years of Democratic control had left some parts of the bureaucracy politically exposed and psychologically not quite prepared to serve the sorts of leaders they were to receive in a Republican administration. The Republicans had been left even less prepared to assume the responsibilities of leadership and management of the kind of administrative system they found. The resultant events served the interests neither of continuity nor of responsiveness, but instead emphasized the lag in the evolution of administrative institutions and perhaps the inherent vulnerability of the bureaucracy in the American constitutional and party system.

THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

Completely in accord with expectations, the advent of a new President brought unusual activity in the field of administrative organization during 1953 and 1954. Turning now from personnel, briefer notice can be taken of the impact of President Eisenhower on the structure of the executive branch, and in particular on the machinery for presidential leadership and control.

Eisenhower and his department heads were on the whole successful in modifying administrative organization to facilitate achievement of their immediate managerial objectives. Eisenhower pushed through without difficulty two important projects that Congress had blocked when Truman proposed them—establishment of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and strengthening the administrative authority of the Secretary of Agriculture over all activities in his department. Several other important reorganizations have been mentioned in previous chapters: strengthening the Department of Defense, consolidation of foreign aid functions in the Foreign Operations Administration, establishment of the United States Information Agency outside the State Department, and consolidation of mobilization planning in the Office of Defense Mobilization. There were additional presidential reorganization plans of lesser importance. Before being officially proposed by the President, all of these projects were put through the screen of the Rockefeller-Flemming-Milton Eisenhower Advisory Committee on Government Organization, which, with the aid of the management analysts of the Bureau of the

Budget, served to assure that major reorganization plans were feasible and in the presidential interest. Some of the proposals brought scattered protests, particularly the one to reorganize the Department of Defense, but the authority of the extended reorganization act enabled them to get through Congress without serious challenge. At the same time other department and agency heads made use of their existing authority to make internal reorganizations to facilitate policy and personnel adjustments and general economy.

The Hoover and Kestnbaum Commissions

But while the administration carried through reorganizations adequate for its immediate purposes, two ambitious schemes mainly originating outside the administration, and about which administration leaders were of divided opinion, ended in partial frustration for their sponsors.

One of these was the second Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, headed by former President Herbert Hoover. The idea of recalling Mr. Hoover to take another look at federal administration apparently started with conservative Republicans in Congress, who got Eisenhower's endorsement of the project while he was still at the Commodore. In due course during the spring of 1953 an authorizing bill was passed and the commission was established along lines similar to its predecessor.[90] An important difference was that the statute instructed the new commission not only to consider how to perform existing functions more efficiently but also to advise on the need for and propriety of government activities—something that had been out of bounds for the prior group.

Mr. Hoover, with the support of the predominantly conservative commission membership, gave the latter aspect heavy emphasis. Task forces and staff groups set up during 1953 and 1954 received assignments indicating preoccupation with governmental impingement on the economy. With one or two exceptions, the commission appeared less interested in general management doctrine than in doctrinaire efforts to get the government out of business. The mixture of administrative and substantive policy recommendations in its reports produced numerous dissenting

[90] That is, it was a twelve-member body with the President, the Vice President, and the Speaker each appointing four. The clusters of four were further split, each containing two representatives of the appointer's branch of the government and two from the public. Unlike the first commission however, this was not required to be a bipartisan body; it had some Democratic representation, but there was a Republican majority.

footnotes and often aroused opposition from affected interests. And for the second time, ironically, Mr. Hoover had to turn in his reports to a Democratic Congress.

The administration received the Hoover reports with grave deference, but by then its own drive to get the government out of business had about run its course. In the next two years a substantial number of the commission's less controversial recommendations, mostly in the administrative realm, were put into effect, but its proposals for major policy change made only slight headway.[91]

A related enterprise, the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, came to a similar end. This was an unwieldy twenty-five-member group of federal, state, and local officials and private citizens. It was authorized by Congress and began its work in mid-1953 pursuant to the Republican commitment to reverse the centralizing trend of American government, stop federal "encroachment" on the states and cities, and "return" functions, decisions, and tax opportunities to lower levels of government. The first chairman was Clarence E. Manion, former dean of the University of Notre Dame law school.

Manion, however, soon got into trouble with the administration by persisting in making speeches to right-wing groups and whipping up support for the Bricker amendment. Early in 1954 he was fired and replaced by Meyer Kestnbaum, a Chicago businessman. The new chairman reoriented the staff and work plans of the group and eventually led it through a re-examination of the federal system from a moderately conservative point of view. While the commission made numerous suggestions for a more rational division of activities among the levels of government, generally following the principle that functions should be performed at the lowest level at which they could be handled effectively, it accepted most of the centralization that had occurred in the United States in the past two decades and eschewed radical recommendations. The majority report, accompanied by dissents from the states-rights wing of the commission, did not stir much action. The main benefit from the exercise was to release and largely to dissipate the energies of those who

[91] A Senate committee reported in 1958 that 53 per cent of the commission's 519 separate recommendations had been at least partially carried out. These were, however, mainly "in the administrative or organizational areas rather than in the highly controversial policy making areas." Important substantive recommendations in such fields as power development, lending policies, procurement, and the civil service were still pending. Senate Committee on Government Operations, *Action by the Congress and the Executive Branch of the Government on the Second Hoover Commission Reports, 1955-57*, S. Rep. 1289, 85 Cong. 2 sess. (1958), p. 2.

had sought extreme conservative economic and social goals under the cloak of states-rights constitutional doctrine.[92]

The Bureaucratization of Leadership

Finally, it is appropriate to note the impact of Eisenhower on the institutional Presidency—a subject that has been extensively written and speculated about elsewhere and needs but brief mention here.[93] Eisenhower's devotion to orderly procedure and staff work, which became evident even before he officially assumed the Presidency, led to important innovations in the White House and Executive Office.

With Eisenhower's strong support, Sherman Adams developed the position of The Assistant to the President into something akin to the military chief of staff. He maintained firm control over staff operations and stood firmly in the stream of presidential business, particularly on the domestic side; his influence in foreign and security affairs was less visible. Nevertheless, Adams' determination to achieve coordination within the administration and to relieve the President of all but the most significant problems—making lesser decisions himself if necessary—made him a powerful if not universally popular figure in the administration.[94]

Insistence on thorough staff work led to a substantial increase in White House personnel. The number grew from about 250 in Truman's time to just under 400 by Eisenhower's second term. The proportion of high-ranking aides grew even more sharply. Insistence on sharp delineation of staff responsibilities produced more and more high-ranking special assistants for particular functions.

The old informal methods of staff communication and co-ordination no longer were sufficient to assure that all the proper people were con-

[92] Although a number of reports and documents of the commission were published, the principal one was U. S. Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *A Report to the President for Transmittal to the Congress* (1955).

[93] Herman M. Somers, "The Federal Bureaucracy and the Change of Administration," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 47 (March 1954), has an early report. Other useful sources include "The Presidential Office," a symposium in *Law and Contemporary Problems,* Vol. 21 (Autumn, 1956); Edward H. Hobbs, "The President and Administration—Eisenhower," *Public Administration Review,* Vol. 18 (Autumn, 1958), pp. 306-13.

[94] A recent study contends: "He made decisions and performed acts which Presidents, since the establishment of the Republic, have been given to doing themselves. Indeed, it is demonstrable that his power and impact upon the national destiny have exceeded that of not a few Presidents. . . ." Louis W. Koenig, *The Invisible Presidency* (1960), p. 338.

sulted before and informed after decisions were made. A few cases of inadequate follow-up, which induced an Eisenhower outburst of "Must I be my own first sergeant?," led to a study in the summer of 1953 and establishment of the post of Staff Secretary in the White House. Built in part on the foundation of previous controls over mail, files, and the flow of paperwork exercised by the Executive Clerk, the new office was made responsible for keeping track of the state of all presidential business, ensuring the proper clearances on action documents, and performing other facilitating and follow-up functions as required by the doctrine of completed staff work.[95] Although this office also owed much to military experience for its form, title, and background of its incumbents, its establishment was substantially in keeping with recommendations of the first Hoover Commission and various public administration experts.

Like most new Presidents, Eisenhower began by emphasizing the importance of group discussion, particularly by the cabinet, in arriving at administration policy. During his first few months in office most of the important decisions were taken in this way, and Eisenhower and his aides repeatedly paid tribute to the enthusiasm and solidarity of "the team." Unlike his predecessors, however, Eisenhower confounded skeptics by maintaining an unusually high degree of unity within his administration and using the cabinet as an important agency of policy making. He was undoubtedly aided in this by a fortuitous coincidence of views of most important policy matters on the part of his principal lieutenants. He contributed greatly to it himself by refusing to make *ex parte* decisions and demanding full cabinet discussion, preferably based on written staff studies, before committing himself. In order to equip the cabinet for its enlarged role, a member of the White House staff was designated as cabinet secretary, and meetings were formalized by circulating agendas and papers for discussion in advance and keeping written records of cabinet procedures.[96] As pointed out in a previous chapter, the National Security Council, essentially a cabinet committee established by statute, was further formalized and heavily relied on by Eisenhower. He also made active use of *ad hoc* cabinet committees and special presidential advisory commissions.

[95] Informal remarks of L. Arthur Minnich, Jr., Assistant Staff Secretary, The White House, to Washington, D.C. Chapter, American Society for Public Administration, June 17, 1959.

[96] A balanced treatment of Eisenhower's use of the cabinet is Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *The President's Cabinet* (1959), pp. 96-113.

Whether this rationalization of procedure resulted in a more effective grip on the complexity of modern government business or tended to insulate the President from reality and make him the effective prisoner of his staff will long remain controversial. On the whole, presidential staff work was probably due for further systematization, and it seems likely that at least some of Eisenhower's innovations will be accepted by his successors. In any event, these institutional developments clearly reflected his personal choice of working methods.

Eisenhower's characteristic leadership style was established early in his tenure and remained essentially unshaken by such events as the challenge by McCarthy, several foreign policy crises, and two major illnesses. He continued to serve as the dignified, temperate, slightly detached presiding officer of a corporate body known as the administration. He set forth before Congress and the country the policy positions and recommendations produced by this organization but seldom identified himself personally and firmly with specific objectives. Constantly asserting his respect for Congress as a co-ordinate branch of the government, he shrank from using his press conferences, his public speeches, or his influence over the Republican national party machinery to attack his enemies or to bid for public support for administration measures. Instead he developed the chief of state aspect of the Presidency, standing as a heroic symbol of past military achievement and a current embodiment of such virtues as probity, moderation, and common sense. For things done or not done by his administration he remained virtually immune to criticism—the American people still liked Ike.[97]

[97] For an interesting essay on the Eisenhower style, see W. W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena* (1960), especially Chap. 50, "The Eisenhower Administration: Its Special Character."

CHAPTER 38

THE TRANSITION PROCESS IN 1952-1953

The transition from Harry S. Truman to Dwight D. Eisenhower, like all presidential transitions, had many unique aspects arising out of the historical situation and the individuals immediately involved. But the 1952-53 experience also contained patterns recognizable from previous transitions. Certain events, problems, and behavioral tendencies reappeared in ways that seem characteristic of such periods. Trends discernible in earlier transitions were confirmed and carried forward. A resumé of the 1952-53 turnover, in light of the experience of previous transitions, should help to clarify the nature of the transition process in modern times and to lay a groundwork for the concluding chapter which considers transition problems and how they might be alleviated.

At least three factors in the 1952-53 situation had the effect of creating new problems, forcing a more explicit recognition of transition problems than ever before, and speeding up the development of practices for dealing with them. First, there was the military-international situation, which vastly increased the stakes of governmental action. The transitions from Taft to Wilson, from Wilson to Harding, and from Hoover to Roosevelt had each occurred in circumstances more difficult than the one preceding it; the Truman to Eisenhower transition continued the trend. Second, there was the Twentieth or "Lame Duck" Amendment; although operating in a transition situation for the first time, the effects of the amendment presumably would be a feature of future transitions. Third, there was the fact that it had been twenty years since the incoming party had last occupied the White House; while not unprecedented, this was

unusual in modern times and had the effect of exacerbating the ordinary difficulties.

THE PREPARATORY PHASE

During his final year in office, President Truman was increasingly afflicted with the same sort of political debilities, which can be taken to be characteristic of outgoing regimes, as those suffered by Taft, Wilson, and Hoover. Truman's popular support ebbed, he had little influence with Congress, his administration lost its *élan,* it became harder and harder to keep the key offices properly staffed, and problems accumulated. Political weakness made it difficult for him either to achieve satisfactory solutions or to make commitments except on the most favorable terms. The result was stalemate on many major issues, both foreign and domestic, and a slowing down of decision making generally. These symptoms became particularly acute after the President's party, if not the President himself, was rejected by the electorate in November.

It is impossible to compare what happened with what might have happened, but it seems reasonable to conclude that in the circumstances the new timetable established by the Twentieth Amendment was a net gain for the national interest. It is difficult to imagine that Truman could have accomplished anything significant if his term had run until March 4 rather than January 20. The longer time would merely have prolonged the stalemate and made the national weakness more apparent, with increased risk that enemies would take advantage of it. An old-style "lame duck" session of Congress could hardly have been productive. And in view of the new administration's strong concern with fiscal matters, it might have been intolerable for the new President to live with a budget that had been presented by his predecessor and acted on by the old Congress.

The new schedule meant, of course, less time for the President and the President-elect to make specific preparations for the transfer of authority. Conscious of this and of the seriousness of the national situation, both Truman and Eisenhower started preparations earlier and carried them out more systematically and in greater detail than any of their predecessors. There was, however, a significant difference in the approaches of the two men to the problem of the transfer. Truman, quite

naturally, was primarily concerned with maintaining an effective government until inauguration day and avoiding a breakdown during the turnover of officials at that time. He assumed that he and Eisenhower shared an interest in and a responsibility for an orderly transition; thus he made preparations to cooperate with Eisenhower. But the President-elect had a different perspective. It is not clear whether he took for granted a neat delivery of the executive branch or whether he assumed that confusion was inevitable. At any rate, his preparations seemed aimed not so much at a juncture with the Truman administration as at a completely fresh start. This difference of approach was partly attributable to the partisan situation and the personal relationships between Truman and Eisenhower, but it was more or less characteristic of others in the same situation—as witness Taft and Wilson, Hoover and FDR.

President Truman's Preparations

Harry Truman, like other outgoing Presidents, placed an especially high value on continuity and order. Influenced by memories of the ordeal of his own early days in the White House, he began thinking about the impending transition soon after he announced that he would not run again. His interest in taking constructive steps was partly stimulated and strongly supported by the federal bureaucracy, whose institutional interests ran in the same direction.

In both the 1944 and 1948 campaigns, there had been a limited amount of quiet communication between high officials of the administration and the opposition candidate, mainly with a view to protecting the national interest in the areas of foreign and military affairs. In 1952, since he was not running himself, it was politically feasible for President Truman to try to break new ground in this respect. Early in the campaign, he arranged for both Governor Stevenson and General Eisenhower to receive regular CIA briefings on foreign and security affairs. He also invited them to the White House to discuss these and other matters. Unfortunately, he did not approach them simultaneously and on the same basis; his conference with Stevenson, which was held first, became publicly involved with Democratic campaign strategy. This gave Eisenhower good reason for declining to meet the President, and the chance of establishing early communication between the administration and its eventual successor was lost. The CIA briefings to the candidates

presumably made some contribution to a more responsible debate and perhaps served to demonstrate to the world the American unity underlying the partisan contest. The extent to which they enhanced the readiness of the winner to assume responsibility for the national security is debatable. At any rate, the briefings solidified a precedent that appears likely to be controlling in the future.

Immediately after election Truman again took the initiative in establishing relationships that might facilitate the transfer. He called Eisenhower's attention to the problem of the budget and urged him to send representatives and observers to the Budget Bureau and other important agencies as quickly as possible. When Eisenhower responded favorably, Truman invited the President-elect to meet with him at the White House, publicizing the invitation so that Eisenhower could hardly have refused. Thus the question of transitional arrangements was raised and a rudimentary system of communication established between the incoming and outgoing groups within hours after election. These steps were perceived by the public as a logical extension of the precedent Hoover had established in consulting Roosevelt, and a sensible response to the urgencies of the times.

The President-elect's Problems

Presidents-elect Wilson and Harding were able to leave on long vacations shortly after election day, and even FDR had enjoyed a few days of relative peace and quiet in Albany before having to come to grips with the future, but General Eisenhower was not allowed even a day of undistracted relaxation after his electoral victory. President Truman began sending messages the morning after election, requiring prompt decisions and commitments. Pressures built up rapidly thereafter, as full realization of the shortness of time, the problems of the promised trip to Korea, and all the things that had to be done crept over the Eisenhower headquarters. Eisenhower gained a short change of pace and scene by going to Augusta, but his responsibilities followed him there. Important consultations and decisions were required almost daily from then until inauguration; what rest he got had to be taken in short snatches.

An already discernible trend toward earlier, more highly organized, and faster paced preparations by the President-elect was continued in

1952-53. While Eisenhower himself apparently had made few specific plans or commitments before election day, there had been some forethought among his supporters, especially on the problem of personnel.[1] His staff did not immediately melt away, either for lack of funds or because the individuals had commitments elsewhere; the inner group of friends and advisers and most of the personal staff Eisenhower had accumulated during the campaign continued on after election with only slight modifications, serving as the nucleus of an administration. Eisenhower himself took the preparations seriously and worked diligently at them. Nevertheless, the combined result of great pressures, little time, plenty of volunteered resources, and his own operating methods gave his preparations far less of a personal touch than those of FDR —not to mention Wilson's or Harding's.

Eisenhower's job between election and inauguration had several specific and several elusive aspects. Obviously, he had to recruit and organize the top level of an administration, establish suitable relationships with the outgoing regime, inform himself on the issues and the governmental situation, and make some plans about objectives to be tackled first. These things would have been difficult enough had it been possible to approach them from a strictly "executive" viewpoint, but it was not that simple. These problems were intimately connected with the broader problems of Eisenhower's leadership position in the Republican party. Everything he did about them had to be considered in terms of his personal relationship and commitments to Senator Taft and the conservatism of many of those entrenched behind Taft in Congress. Eisenhower's preparations involved critical choices about the factional position of his administration, the sorts of political support he would seek or dispense with, and his leadership strategy.

A Cabinet Strategy and Its Costs

The first demonstration of Eisenhower dispatch was the feat of recruiting a future budget director and getting him on the job as an observer at the Budget Bureau before mid-November. Even more spectacular was the fact that the entire cabinet was completed before Eisenhower

[1] Changes in the style of political operations are illuminated by comparing preelection personnel planning for Wilson and for Eisenhower. In 1912, Colonel House had moved in party circles, making mental notes about possible cabinet members. In 1952, Eisenhower's friends retained a management consulting firm.

left for Korea at the end of that month. Previous Presidents-elect, working toward the March 4 deadline, ordinarily had not started negotiations toward a cabinet until December or completed them before late February. Eisenhower top appointees thus got seven or eight weeks "lead time," which enabled some of them to choose their principal subordinates and acquire at least a superficial knowledge of what they were stepping into.

The speed with which the cabinet was chosen obviously had something to do with the fact that it was a predominantly "Eisenhower" cabinet, containing few concessions to the Taft wing of the party. The extent to which this was a deliberate or an inadvertent result of haste is difficult to say. If he were going to proceed rapidly, Eisenhower probably had little choice but to build his cabinet around men like Dulles, Brownell, and Summerfield, who were already part of his campaign team, or men like Humphrey, Wilson, and Dodge, who could be quickly identified, agreed on, and recruited by his closest advisers. But, there also were signs that some of his advisers, if not the President-elect himself, seized on the need for prompt action as a plausible justification for forging ahead and getting committed to a desirable cabinet without the danger of exposing Eisenhower to the conservative pressures that the traditional round of party caucusing and clearances would have involved. At any rate, Eisenhower followed a cabinet-making procedure different from those demonstrated by Wilson, Harding, or Roosevelt.

His strategy, if strategy it was, clearly had its costs as well as its benefits. For one thing, the problem of conflicts of interest was slighted. For another thing, the manner in which the appointment decisions were made slighted the courtesies expected by party officials and senators, especially the latter. And finally, the origins of the appointees gave a basis for Taft to protest that Eisenhower was discriminating against his supporters, despite a commitment in the agreement of Morningside Heights not to do so. It became almost necessary for Eisenhower to make concessions if he wanted to keep peace in the party. But he had no carefully thought out position to which he could retreat; he appeared to concede his personal control of the appointing process. After inauguration day it became increasingly unclear what the criteria for political appointment were; the requirements of factional balance, executive competence, and policy compatibility often were not reconciled. The person-

nel planning and executive recruiting done prior to and just after election, despite its utility, had not been thorough or in the broadest sense political enough.

Organizing in Advance

Early recruiting did, however, enable Eisenhower to start organizing his administration well before inauguration. The trip to Korea provided him and several key members of the future cabinet with a first-hand look at their biggest policy problem; in a few days of relatively leisurely discussion on the return trip, the seeds of what were to become perhaps the central policies of the Eisenhower administration were planted and began to germinate. Later, most of the new cabinet appointees had time to settle their personal affairs and squeeze in at least a few days of briefing in Washington and consultation with miscellaneous advisers before January 20. Assembling the principals of the incoming administration in New York a week before inauguration also was helpful. The press probably overdid the significance of the "Commodore Cabinet" as a policy making body, but the meetings did help to develop a sense of unity in the future administration and some common expectations on such matters as the federal budget and the future of economic controls. It was an important advance over previous transitions to have all the members of the cabinet nominally acquainted with each other before inauguration day. The extent of the deficiency of these preparations in compensating for the governmental inexperience of most of the appointees, the complexity of their responsibilities, and the demands on them by virtue of the post-Twentieth Amendment legislative cycle did not become apparent until later.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The relations between Truman and Eisenhower and their respective associates from election to inauguration day were a far cry from the days when Taft and Wilson, still under the influence of nineteenth century usage, felt unable to approach each other publicly and dared to correspond privately only on such safe subjects as housekeeping on Pennsylvania Avenue. Hoover and Roosevelt had swept away all that. But the

difficulties of the Hoover-Roosevelt relationship had become part of the lore of politics, providing warnings of dangers to be avoided. Against this background, Truman and Eisenhower established a framework of cooperation that was a vast improvement over any previous transition. While leaving much to be desired, their relationship served the minimal purpose of maintaining a rough façade of American unity on the most significant current foreign policy issue and avoiding a gross breakdown of national security or administrative arrangements.

Tendencies of Presidents and Presidents-elect

In 1952-53 the behavior of Truman and Eisenhower ran true to the form suggested by previous transitions. It was the outgoing President who took the initiative in trying to establish relationships that might maximize continuity and assist the newcomer in getting off to a good start. It was the President-elect who responded with extreme caution, avoided commitments or too intimate consultations, and gave the outgoing President the impression that he did not appreciate efforts to help him and perhaps did not fully realize what he was up against. Truman and Eisenhower could not see eye to eye because they were afflicted, although to a lesser degree, with much the same kinds of astigmatism as suffered by Hoover and Roosevelt.

The outgoing President tends to be a natural conservative. His experience has sharpened his sense of the importance of the Presidency and given him a keen awareness of the difficulty of governmental problems. At the center of the intricate web of policy and administration, he dislikes having any of its strands broken unnecessarily. Therefore he pursues his successor with information and advice, assuming that any reasonable man will see things much as he sees them once the facts are clearly stated. Having lived for so long with his own formulation of the issues, he finds it difficult to see that they can be stated in any other way, except by deliberate distortion. The President-elect is naturally reluctant to get involved before he is legally responsible, particularly since he is simultaneously hard pressed to organize his administration. He also is acutely aware of his lack of solid information, and fearful of being led into an unwise commitment or forced to spend some of his political credit bailing out his predecessor.

In the case of Truman and Eisenhower, there were additional factors

personal to the two individuals. Eisenhower had been angered by some of Truman's campaign statements, which he regarded as attacks on his personal honor. He was now unable to swallow this anger or to take seriously Truman's proclaimed desire to establish precedents that would benefit the Presidency regardless of the feelings of the individuals concerned. He found dealing with Truman extremely distasteful and apparently was encouraged by his associates to have as little traffic with him as possible—a characteristic attitude for members of a President-elect's entourage to take, as evidenced by recollections of Moley and Tugwell. Truman undoubtedly meant well in his overtures to Eisenhower. Yet, reading between the lines of his *Memoirs* and studying the available record, it is easy to see how Truman's approach might have seemed hypocritical to Eisenhower. Having engaged, Eisenhower thought, in despicable campaign tactics, Truman now was taking high ground, wrapping himself in virtue, and probably being a little patronizing about it. As he described pending problems to Eisenhower at their White House meeting, Truman was indirectly calling Eisenhower to account for his campaign statements and taking certain grim satisfaction out of confronting him with "realities." Truman's formulations of the issues may or may not have been the realities, but in either case Eisenhower had won the election and was in no mood to listen to Dutch uncle lectures.

The Problem of Responsibility

Mr. Truman was far more sophisticated in his approach to Eisenhower than Hoover had been toward Roosevelt. He asserted that he was not trying to force Eisenhower into commitments or to thrust responsibility on him prematurely. Truman would be President until January 20, and was quite prepared to fulfill all the responsibilities of the office and make any decisions that might be necessary. By implication, there would be no such leadership breakdown as had occurred on the eve of the 1933 inauguration, when Hoover had shrunk from a decision because Roosevelt would not join him.

But having said this, Truman then invited Eisenhower's "concurrence" on the Korean prisoner issue. This was a subject of great importance, and Eisenhower had no plausible reason for not supporting him. It was a modest request compared to Hoover's demand that Roosevelt

promise a continuation of the whole Hoover package of fiscal and monetary policies. But it did put Eisenhower in somewhat the same position Roosevelt had been in, and his instinctive reaction was to shy away. He certainly could not openly disavow the principle of no forcible repatriation, but his reluctance to tie himself specifically to a position that seemed to lead only to stalemate was understandable; settling the Korean war might require a reformulation of the prisoner issue. Eisenhower's way out, then, was to give indirect support to the Truman policy through a statement by a Senate spokesman but to avoid a clear personal commitment. The episode is further confirmation of the difficulties of united action by the President and President-elect, even on matters of great importance, when one has the legal responsibility and the other the effective power.

Fortunately, no serious emergencies arose between election and inauguration to test the tenuous relationship between the two presidential personages. The details were covered with the mantle of security, but one must presume that the CIA briefings and the information from the Pentagon and the National Security Council conveyed to Eisenhower through his aides kept him reasonably well informed on current foreign developments and the government's security plans. In any major emergency that had been envisaged and planned for, Eisenhower knew approximately what Truman would do if it came before inauguration, or what decisions would be expected of him if it came afterward. The difficulty, of course, is that not all contingencies can be foreseen, or can be counted on to occur in ways that make the advance planning fully relevant. If a major unforeseen emergency had occurred just before inauguration day, for example, it seems doubtful that Truman and Eisenhower could have improvised a relationship to give the country continuity of effective, responsible leadership.

The Budget and Presidential Messages

The new problem of timing and responsibility under the Twentieth Amendment for the budget and the principal presidential messages to Congress, about which there was some worrying in advance of the 1952-53 transition, turned out to be quite manageable—at least in a procedural sense. President Truman presented Congress, when it convened, with a final report on his stewardship and a closing statement of

political faith—a fully appropriate sort of message that left the way clear for Eisenhower to deliver his own State of the Union address and legislative requests a few weeks later. Truman's economic message was a general report on the state and prospects of the economy; since it neither required action nor committed the incoming administration, it could stand as submitted.

In the budget, of course, there was high potential for disruption, particularly if Truman had left on the table a budget deliberately prepared with a view to embarrassing the new administration and gaining partisan advantage for the Democrats. Fortunately, he did not do this but submitted what was for the most part an "honest budget" in terms of prior commitments and Democratic policy views. The arrangement to have Mr. Dodge at the Budget Bureau as an observer for the President-elect beginning shortly after election day presumably would have inhibited the Trumanites from succumbing to any last-minute temptations to "rig" the budget, had such temptations been present, and also served to reassure the suspicious Republicans that nothing of that kind was being done. Mr. Dodge's studies gave the incoming President and his associates a more realistic approach to the problem of revising the budget than they had previously taken, and provided several weeks in which to plan how this high-priority commitment was to be executed. Relationships were established between Dodge and the Budget Bureau staff that made that agency an effective instrument of the new President promptly after inauguration. The budget revision process was not without its difficulties, which will be described in a subsequent section, but on the whole the procedure followed probably put Eisenhower in a better position to make effective, responsible budgetary decisions than if Truman had somehow postponed submitting the budget and left it for Eisenhower to assemble.

Briefings, Black Books, Advance Men, and Holdovers

Most of the specific devices used to achieve communication and continuity between the incoming and outgoing administrations in 1953 were not in themselves new. Outgoing department heads often had left written memoranda for their successors, or invited them for pre-inaugural consultations; more often than not, there was at least one subcabinet officer in each department who carried over into the new administration.

The difference in 1953 was that instead of being left to the discretion and initiative of the separate department heads, such activities were now carried on all over the government by positive presidential direction. Truman set out deliberately to establish a precedent that the outgoing President is expected to concern himself with this problem and establish a pattern of conduct for his entire administration.

The effectiveness of these liaison efforts varied greatly from agency to agency. At the very least, they eased the procedural aspects of changing the guard, and in some areas, particularly the budget and national security fields, they contributed significantly to an effective turnover of the substantive business. But in many agencies the efforts had little success, for a variety of reasons. Aside from personal incompatibility between incoming and outgoing individuals, the advice offered was often too rigid, and the material too detailed to be grasped quickly. Many of the Eisenhower appointees had neither the time nor the inclination to engage in serious discussion with their predecessors of the subtleties of departmental administration, or the why's and wherefore's of existing policy. Some of them simply did not know enough about the business to enter such discussions without serious loss of face. Furthermore, schooled by Republican doctrine to distrust all works of Truman and the bureaucracy, they were fearful of being misled or "captured." In the absence of any signal from Eisenhower that they were expected to take advantage of such aids, the Republican appointees tended to give but token recognition to efforts to help them by people already in the executive branch, choosing to receive advice from more "reliable" sources in Congress, the business community, and Republican-allied interest groups. Failure to establish effective communication between old and new officials contributed to some unfortunate occurrences in the departments and agencies after inauguration.

AFTER INAUGURATION

It was in the post-inaugural phase of the 1952-53 transition that the most serious difficulties arose. For the first several months, the new administration appeared to be uncertain and tentative about a great many things on which it had been expected to have specific policies; the new executive appointees found themselves inadequately prepared and over-

burdened by the demands on them; there was suspicion and hostility between the new executives and their career staffs; and the executive branch was vulnerable to intervention by congressional interests and extremists of various sorts. This was in contrast to expectations created by the fast clip of Eisenhower's pre-inaugural preparations, his image as a dynamic leader, and the previously dominant patterns of presidential behavior.

During this period, it should be made clear, the government did not break down in its routine functions and services. Social security checks were issued, mail was delivered, and forest fires were fought. In a few important policy fields—economic controls, debt management, and federal expenditures, for example—the Eisenhower administration arrived in Washington knowing substantially what it wanted and moved off smartly. But in many other fields, particularly those in which the programs were politically sensitive or required frequent adjustment to changing conditions, the transition was painful and prolonged. All across the government at middle and upper levels, where decisions about policy adjustments, expansions and contractions of programs, and problems sent up from below provide the daily grist of business, there was confusion and uncertainty. Decision channels already clogged with problems that the Truman administration had been unable to dispose of in its declining months were even more fully blocked while the new administrators stopped all new commitments, learned their jobs, improvised budget cuts, and put existing policies under the microscope. It was mid-summer of 1953—around the end of the first congressional session —before most federal agencies were on something like a business-as-usual basis; some of the departments were unsettled long after that. It took approximately a year for the Eisenhower administration to complete its reviews and adjustments of basic policies and take significant action on most of the major items on its agenda. Meanwhile the upper bureaucracy was demoralized and ineffective, and the administration leaders felt frustrated by the slowness with which they were achieving control and moving toward their policy objectives.

These post-inaugural problems require a variety of explanations. Some of the difficulties arose from forces more or less inherent in any transition situation, accentuated by deficiencies in the Eisenhower pre-inaugural planning. Other problems were specific to the 1953 situation and the personalities involved.

The Effects of Limited Advance Planning

Any new administration, no matter how able or experienced its members may be, must undergo a period of "shakedown" before everyone has learned his role and begun to perform with normal effectiveness. The several weeks allowed the Eisenhower department heads for pre-inaugural consultations, briefings, and personnel recruiting was far more than men in their positions had ever had before. Nevertheless, the requirements for effective performance had grown so enormously between 1933 and 1953 that these preparations were not adequate. The subcabinet and other appointees designated after inauguration were even worse off, being in most cases thrust directly into action with almost no warm-up.

Certain latent effects of the Twentieth Amendment also exposed sharply the deficiencies of the pre-inaugural preparations. There was insufficient realization in the President-elect's camp of the demands that would be made on the new administration by a regular congressional session that had already begun by January 20.

First there was the federal budget. To a considerable extent, Eisenhower's commitments had to be expressed through modifications of the budget that Congress already had before it and would have to act on before adjourning. As noted above, some of the problems involved in this were anticipated in a general way and were mitigated by having an Eisenhower observer at the Budget Bureau long before inauguration. But revising the budget to the extent required by Eisenhower's commitments could not be done from the top down; the process had to start in the bureaus and the departments. This put the new departmental executives in a difficult position. Fully exposed to congressional and outside interest pressures, and face-to-face with a bureaucracy that naturally tended to defend the necessity of existing programs, they had to come up with budget cuts in a hurry. The job of budget revision was accomplished on time and without any major disasters. In fact, the entire budget mechanism proved itself one of the most effective devices available to a new administration. But in the circumstances there was a certain haste and arbitrariness about the revision process that might have been avoided if the new department heads and their aides had been more familiar with departmental operations before they started.

While the demands of budget revision were at least partly foreseen,

the Eisenhower administration found itself even less prepared and harder pressed by the requirements of doing business with Congress on general legislative matters. Manned by veterans and fully organized by inauguration day, Congress was from the beginning "one up" in terms of traditional legislative-executive rivalry. Eisenhower had a few specific matters ready for early legislative consideration, but no comprehensive program; the major items were left for post-inaugural study and negotiation. He and his staff did not appear to realize fully the significance of the deadlines established by expiring legislation, the large number of legislative actions required in an ordinary session just to keep the system operating, and the insatiable appetite of congressional committees for executive appearances, reports, and commitments of various kinds. Therefore, at the same time that they were trying to revise their budgets and get acquainted with their agencies, the Eisenhower appointees were harassed by legislative requests and interventions to which they did not really know how to respond. The opportunity for legislative accomplishment during the traditional "honeymoon" period was missed, the legislative calendar became clogged with major items toward the end of the session, and a great deal of business had to be carried over to the second year. Even allowing for President Eisenhower's wish to be fully respectful of the prerogatives of Congress, it is clear that he and his appointees were not adequately prepared to hold down their end of the Pennsylvania Avenue seesaw.

The Republicans and the Bureaucracy

The Republicans had been out of power for an unusually long time. They were short of executives with the sort of governmental sophistication for which no amount of business experience could fully compensate. More fundamentally, the Republicans had developed attitudes during their long years in opposition that caused them to perceive the transition problem in a far different way than it was perceived by the bureaucracy or the Democrats who were leaving office, thus virtually guaranteeing misunderstanding and a certain amount of turmoil. Republican opposition to what was done in the government during the twenty years of Democratic rule had become so generalized that many of Eisenhower's appointees approached their jobs with the assumption that most of the government's policies were wrong, most of its programs were

badly administered, and most of its leading officials were incompetent or worse. Therefore, the notion of maximizing continuity and keeping on an even keel while plotting new courses meant little to them. They were not stepping into a going organization; they were receivers in bankruptcy. There was no considered plan for preserving the strength of the administrative system while making the desired changes, for dealing with the inevitable resurgence of pressure for patronage, and for enlisting the enthusiasm of the civil service.

In the narrow context of the ancient contest between merit and spoils, much of what happened on the Republicans return to power was traditional. The sequence of events and the institutional positions of the President, the department heads, the congressmen, the party officials, and the civil servants were familiar from previous transitions. Compared to other transitions the amount of personnel turnover was moderate, particularly in view of the intervening growth in the number of government officials. It was, however, a disappointment to the civil servants themselves and to the outside observers who had thought that professionalization and the extension of the merit system had stabilized the civil service and banished large-scale patronage forever. Partisan pressures were strong, after twenty years, and the President and most of his department heads not only tolerated but cooperated in the patronage surge until the first mid-term election returned a Democratic congressional majority.

But the advent of the Eisenhower administration raised the far more significant question of the responsiveness of the federal bureaucracy to a change in political leadership. The civil servants, perhaps a little naively, assumed that for the most part their political neutrality and responsiveness to new instructions would be taken for granted by the incoming political executives. Instead, many of the new appointees approached the bureaucracy with hostility, suspicion, and sometimes contempt. The bureaucracy responded in kind, and there was high tension between the new officials and holdovers for the first several months.

In a few functional areas such as budgeting, personnel administration, and some activities of the military departments, the new political appointees had no other choice than to rely on their senior bureaucratic aides, and in most such cases the latter proved their usefulness and responsiveness. In most parts of the government, however, the civil servants were not trusted and therefore were relegated to minor roles in the

critical process of policy adjustment. Then came reorganizations, reductions in force, and a security review, all carried out in a way that contributed to the demoralization and disorganization of the civil service. There were no serious reports of bureaucratic sabotage (the few charges of it come from individuals with patronage axes to grind), and before the end of the first Eisenhower administration some of his appointees were paying public tributes to the ability and devotion of the career service. The potentiality of the bureaucracy as an instrument of political change was not fully tested, but the conclusion that the induced administrative instability hurt the new administration more than it helped it seems justifiable. One of the institutional residues of the transition, Schedule C, perhaps served to affirm the right of any department head to control a certain number of positions for policy purposes, even though the principle became somewhat blurred in practice. The 1952-53 experience was a convincing demonstration of serious inflexibility and political weakness in the federal personnel system.

Republican Doctrine and Choices

Not all of the post-inaugural problems in 1953 can be attributed to institutional weaknesses or inadequate planning. Many of the problems —or at least the frustrations of expectations that created problems for some people—arose from basic Republican objectives and Eisenhower's choice of the kind of President he wanted to be. Most of the things Eisenhower himself wanted to do were not of the kind that required dramatic executive or legislative action. Some of his fellow Republicans, to be sure, envisaged an all-out effort to recapture the past, but the President's objectives were relatively moderate. For the moment, at least, he wanted to thaw the cold war, adjust the nation's posture of defense, scale down expenditures, reduce taxes, create a more favorable climate for business, and clean up the government in an administrative way. The main legislative requirements of the first year were to stall the extremists on such measures as the Bricker Amendment, to maintain the status quo on foreign aid, trade, and taxes, and to put through a few specific items required by campaign commitments and the internal needs of the executive branch. Eisenhower did not regard it as essential to burst forth with a big legislative program and try to maximize achievement in his early months; instead, there was a great flowering of advisory commissions and study groups.

The pervading quality of tentativeness about the administration in its early stages also derived directly from Eisenhower's doctrines of presidential leadership. He deliberately set out to be a whiggish President. The historic position of his party suggested it, and Senator Taft and the other party leaders virtually demanded it. Eisenhower's personality and operating methods, which leaned more toward conciliation, negotiation, and compromise than toward personal creativity and domination, complemented the historical situation. He chose, therefore, to be deferential to Congress, to the point of permitting congressional intrusions into executive affairs. When he wanted legislation, he tried to clear the way by advance consultation with the leaders and to remain open to all reasonable compromises. He conceived his responsibility to be to propose legislation but not necessarily to muster public and political support to prevail against Congress if the legislature was inclined otherwise. While he cherished hopes of ultimately re-making the Republican party in his own image, his immediate tactic was to conciliate most factions, even making important concessions to the extremists, in order to hold the party together. Inside his administration, Eisenhower leaned heavily on his department heads for both policy leadership and administrative direction, and tolerated wide diversities of opinion. With a President committed to this pattern of leadership, it was almost inevitable that the administration would be relatively slow to complete the transition and establish its own policy positions and operating methods.

Regardless of how history eventually evaluates his administration, it must be recorded that in his own time President Eisenhower's methods led to—or at least did not prevent—political success. War and major depression were avoided, the Republican center was gradually strengthened at the expense of the right wing, and a regime established that was economically conservative in tone if not in all details. Eisenhower won a second term by an overwhelming margin and remained a popular favorite. In so doing he refurbished for the modern era a concept of the Presidency that had been written off as obsolete by a generation of civil servants, journalists, and political scientists who had come to maturity in the era of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

PART SIX

TRANSITIONS OF THE FUTURE

"As an instrument for carrying out the judgment and will of the people of a nation, the American Executive occupies an enviable position among the executives of the states of the world, combining as it does the elements of popular control and the means for vigorous action and leadership—uniting stability and flexibility. The American Executive as an institution stands across the path of those who mistakenly assert that democracy must fail because it can neither decide promptly nor act vigorously."

—PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE FOR
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 39

TRANSITION PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

What of the transitions of the future?

In an area so affected by unpredictable events, varying personalities, and the changing requirements of historical situations, it would be venturesome indeed to attempt either to predict or to prescribe in detail. Nevertheless, presidential transitions are heavily influenced by stable legal requirements, slowly evolving institutional forces, and gradually accumulating precedents. The experience reviewed in this book provides a basis for some general expectations about lines of development and problems that may arise in the future, and some indication of the means and prospects for their mitigation.

In recent years there have been increasing signs of recognition by governmental leaders that the process of ushering out an old administration and bringing its successor to the point of readiness to govern is not a matter that can be left altogether to improvisation. To the extent that the scholar succeeds in contributing to a wider awareness of problems that can be anticipated, he may engage in self-defeating prophecy by stimulating interest in measures to solve those problems. Such a result is by no means certain, however.[1] And while some prob-

[1] An eminent historian has commented: "The trouble with historical analogy as a means of prognostication is that, while it is fairly clear that human beings *can* learn from history, they can be *counted upon* neither to do so nor not to do so. . . . Since they cannot be counted upon either to learn or not to learn, historical analogies present us most often with clues to *possible*, rather than *probable* behavior, with the ability only to *anticipate* rather than to *predict*, to *take precautions* rather than to *control*." Gottschalk, in Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Robert Angell, *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology* (1945), p. 71.

lems of transition are of a sort that can be substantially solved by forethought and purposeful action, others are rooted deep in the American constitutional and political party structure. These enduring problems can be ameliorated by analysis leading to more uniform expectations and various actions to cushion their impact, but their ultimate solutions, if any be possible, depend on the longer processes of institutional evolution and reform.

THE OLD ADMINISTRATION

Under a Constitution providing for presidential elections and inaugurations at fixed dates, one must be pessimistic about avoiding some diminution of governmental effectiveness toward the end of a presidential term. How early this diminution sets in, and how serious it becomes, depends on the situation. A strong and popular President seeking re-election may be able to maintain a relatively vigorous regime, subject only to the distractions of campaigning, and then to go on with hardly a pause if he receives electoral endorsement. But to the extent that there is doubt of the President's re-election, there is likely to be a tendency to defer decisions until the results are known. If the President is ineligible for, or not seeking, another term—and particularly if there is substantial prospect of a party overturn—the President is likely to find himself under increasing handicaps as the campaign year progresses. His administration will be subject to internal debilities; he may find it difficult to muster domestic support for measures he considers necessary; foreign nations may prefer to await the election results rather than deal with him; and he may feel increasingly hesitant to make commitments that he cannot guarantee or that may unduly bind his successor.

In such a situation, the President is likely to feel conflicting impulses and pressures. On the one hand, he will wish to use all the political skill and resources at his command to preserve the strength of his administration as long as possible. To that end, he may prefer to gloss over his weaknesses, profess confidence that he (or his party) will win the election, and face the question of turning over power to a successor administration only if and when the election returns make it necessary. He can tell himself that such a course is fully in the national interest; certainly the nation is not well served by an administration that appears to all the world as beaten and ineffective long before it can leave office.

On the other hand, the responsibilities borne by the federal government in recent times make it increasingly risky for the President to act until the end of his administration as though his tenure is unlimited, and then improvise arrangements for transition to his successor. As pointed out earlier, uneasiness on this point was felt by an outgoing President at least as early as Taft. In 1932, President Hoover judged it necessary to take the unprecedented step of seeking consultations with his successor shortly after election day. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, even while running for re-election, permitted or directed their subordinates to establish certain kinds of communication (largely informal and confidential) with their opponents and possible successors. In 1952, President Truman openly sought during the campaign to provide both candidates with information he thought they should have, and made further efforts immediately after election to establish the precedent that an outgoing President is expected to assume responsibility for facilitating the transition to his successor. The practice of giving intelligence briefings to the candidates, which was first raised to the level of public visibility in 1952 and was repeated at the request of the out-party candidate in 1956, has been revived by President Eisenhower in 1960, almost as a matter of course.[2] And the President has already declared his intention of offering his successor complete information on the governmental situation as soon as the election results are known.[3]

Just how future Presidents nearing the end of their terms will perceive their duty in this respect remains to be seen. However, the experience and precedents of the past, plus the prospect of high international tensions in the indefinite future, suggest the likelihood of continuing and perhaps even earlier steps by outgoing administrations to assure continuity of effective government and to dramatize American unity to the world.

The approaches that Presidents Hoover and Truman made to their

[2] In response to a question on this point in his press conference of March 30, 1960, President Eisenhower said: "Well, . . . always we do that. They did it for me in 1952, and I did it in '56; as quick as the nominees are named, they begin to get it, and for this very practical reason: One of the two of them is the successor, . . . and so you have to keep him informed." (*New York Times,* Mar. 31, 1960.) This declaration of intention was followed through shortly after the Democratic National Convention, when Eisenhower offered CIA briefings to Senators John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic presidential and vice presidential nominees. The Republican nominee, Vice President Richard M. Nixon, of course, needed no such arrangement, since he was already in position to receive the information as a member of the National Security Council.

[3] *New York Times* (July 7, 1960).

successors left something to be desired; future outgoing Presidents may be able to profit from a study of their errors. The historical record suggests that outgoing Presidents tend to be more concerned about transitional arrangements than are Presidents-elect. One of the continuing problems seems to be to encourage the President-elect to take this subject seriously and to respond appropriately if his predecessor approaches him. It remains questionable whether fully adequate communication and confidence can ever be established *after* election in instances when a campaign has resulted in a party overturn and left a residue of bitterness and suspicion of motives. Possibly some future President, choosing his time and means carefully, so as to suggest neither weakness in his own party and administration nor an improper effort to bind his successor, will be able to open the subject of transitional arrangements during the campaign in a way that stimulates both candidates to take thought of the future and establishes a relationship that can be appropriately expanded after the winner becomes known. It will be a significant step forward if it can be publicly established that an early start on preparations for a turnover, including appropriate communication between the administration and both candidates, is merely a sensible precaution. As in the case of the intelligence briefings, one or two instances might be sufficient to create precedents that would be virtually compelling in the future.

The occupant of the White House cannot alone ensure a smooth transition to his successor. But in any given instance his conduct is crucial in getting the process started, reaching the right understandings with the other parties, and establishing a tone that will enhance the probability of the enterprise being carried through with dignity and statesmanship.

PREPARATIONS BY CANDIDATES

Some of the same considerations that have led recent outgoing Presidents to earlier recognition of the problems of transition have also stimulated recent presidential candidates to make, or permit to be made on their behalf, far more specific plans and preparations in anticipation of victory than were customary before World War I. However, practice still tends to lag behind need in this respect; opportunities for

significant short-run improvement in transition processes lie within the reach of future candidates.

It would be unwise to ask or expect too much, for there are formidable difficulties. Candidates, particularly if they have not previously held executive office, may not fully appreciate the complexity of the problems they will face on the morning after election if they should win. There is also an unfortunate body of political lore or superstition that holds it unseemly and perhaps unlucky to start preparing to take over the government before the electoral victory is won. Even if the candidates or those around them should sense the problem and desire to meet it, they will have difficulty finding time or energy to think beyond election day while the campaign itself is making importunate demands. Their first job, after all, is to win. Furthermore, there are often important subjects on which commitments cannot be made or a course of action determined until the political situation is clarified by the election returns.

With all these obstacles, there remain opportunities that no presidential candidate has ever fully exploited. It would be a considerable step forward if future candidates and political managers could stop thinking of campaigning and organizing an administration as completely separate jobs, with a sharp break at election day. The candidate who fully recognizes the continuously unfolding nature of these political processes, and shapes his campaign plan and organization with some attention to the position he will be in after election day, is well started on his task.

Actually, the most essential things need not require large investments of the candidate's time or dangerously premature commitments. There are several kinds of preparation that can be carried on under the supervision of aides who possess the candidate's confidence, with only occasional attention from the candidate himself.

One need is for someone to make tentative arrangements, including the financing, for an adequate headquarters site, staff, and other administrative requirements of the election to inauguration period. While Presidents-elect in the past have always managed to hold the key members of their staffs together and to find the necessary money by juggling residual campaign funds, accepting additional private contributions, and making liberal use of volunteers, there have occasionally been difficulties in this respect. If possible, arrangements should be made to avoid

putting the President-elect under obligation to any private individual or group.[4]

A second need is for the candidate to have a few trusted aides exploring the governmental scene in enough detail to provide him with reasonable expectations of the issues that will require early decisions, both in the period between election and inauguration and soon after inauguration. No amount of scouting can anticipate everything that may happen, particularly in the international arena, but a great deal of relevant information is available to the public from the executive branch and in the daily newspapers. Consultations with congressmen, former executive officials, and other knowledgeable persons would be useful. Even a study of such obvious sources as the federal budget and the timetable for legislative action on it, the calendar of already scheduled international conferences, and the list of deadlines established by expiring legislation will do much to clarify and put in orderly time dimension the requirements of the future. To the extent that tentative policy positions and actions can be planned through "brain trust" or other staff activity and coordinated with campaign speeches and commitments, the candidate will be both guarded from unwise commitments and prepared to make future decisions.

A third need of the candidate is for forethought on staffing. This does not necessarily mean that he must choose his cabinet before he is elected, or that he ought to assign any specific persons to specific places, although he may find it convenient to do so in a few special cases. A more fundamental need is to have assembled during the campaign the information on the basis of which he can make such decisions when the appropriate time comes. This job has two aspects.

One is to identify the positions in which the President-elect will have a substantial interest and to make a preliminary determination of the order in which it will be desirable for him to arrive at some decision about them. This is a research job of some size, requiring considerable knowledge of the federal administrative system. In some circumstances,

[4] The author's colleague, Paul T. David, has made the interesting suggestion that Congress might consider authorizing and appropriating funds to be available to the President-elect to meet the expenses connected with his preparations between election and inauguration day. (Personal letter, May 18, 1960.) Designation of public funds for this purpose would increase the President-elect's independence and emphasize the public interest in having him make suitable, responsible, and thorough preparations to assume office. Another possibility that might be explored would be for the outgoing President to make available money from the President's Emergency Fund.

it might be given over to an outside agency, as was the inventory of Eisenhower's personnel requirements in 1952. However, to reach maximum usefulness, it probably should be carried out by persons closely enough in touch with the candidate to be able to anticipate his choice of priorities and strategy in taking over the government.

The other part of the preparation for staffing decisions is to assemble data on enough prospective appointees to provide a clear idea of the material available and the range of choice for the principal positions. How far this personnel spadework should go—whether, for example, it should include negotiations to establish the availability of individuals —is problematical. Obviously, it needs to be done with a high degree of sophistication and tact, if it is not to create disturbances that will endanger the campaign effort itself. The candidate need not and perhaps should not be directly involved in preparing this roster of talent. However, its utility will depend, in part, on the extent to which his later preferences as to types of appointees and the balance of factions and interests to be included in his administration has been anticipated. For that reason, it will benefit from any guidance he can find time to give.

PROBLEMS OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

On the morning after election the successful candidate stands at the peak of political success. But the view from that height can hardly lead to complacency, for many problems of great complexity that until now have been only dimly sensed and perhaps deliberately avoided come fully into view. As the President-elect contemplates all the things that must somehow be done or decided by January 20, the next ten or eleven weeks seem a short time indeed.

The most obvious and specific tasks of the President-elect are to direct the recruiting, organization, and orientation of upwards of a hundred men and women who will form the core of his personal staff and key executive appointees; to inform himself about the pending issues and to develop policies and plans for dealing with them in as specific a fashion as possible; and to handle any negotiations or other relationships with his predecessor that may be required. These jobs are formidable enough, considering the problem of time, but they are further

complicated by other less tangible but nonetheless crucial considerations. For they must be carried out in a political atmosphere of uncertainty and tension, in which everything the President-elect does is scrutinized in relation to a leadership and factional situation that may have been thrown into flux by his victory. If he is sensitive to such matters, the President-elect conducts himself with awareness of the image of the man-in-action he is creating in the public mind, and its portent for his post-inaugural success. And he must be prepared to withstand pressure and deal selectively with the tremendous number of persons and organizations, at home and abroad, that want to congratulate him, advise him, get his views, or extract favors and commitments of one kind or another. Already the Presidency becomes a lonely place.

The President-elect's conduct will inevitably be strongly influenced by the current situation and his personal preferences. Nevertheless, it appears quite likely that future Presidents-elect will continue the trend toward more highly organized, faster paced preparations designed to bring an administration into being and have it ready to act on inauguration day.

Alternative Staffing Plans

Here is the point at which pre-election preparations of the sort suggested in the preceding section can pay off. If this preliminary work has been done reasonably well, it will be possible to make, shortly before or at the latest just after election day, a series of decisions that constitute in effect a plan for building an administration. This is not a simple matter; it requires the weighing of factors that will vary in each instance, as well as exceedingly delicate political judgments that only the man who is to become President can make. The considerations include the operational requirements of taking control of the executive branch, the probable manner in which the outgoing administration will wish to deal with its successor, the substantive issues or fields in which the earliest decisions are likely to be required, the extent to which the President-elect will wish to retain personal control in the next critical weeks as against decentralization to key subordinates, and his present and anticipated future relations with the principal leaders and factions of his party, both in and out of Congress. It is possible to suggest various ways of proceeding.

One possibility would be for the President-elect to designate im-

mediately after election day the key officers of his personal staff, the Executive Office of the President, and the heads of the departments and principal agencies of the executive branch. These officials would promptly take up the task of establishing relationships with their counterparts in the outgoing administration, informing themselves of the issues and the administrative situations in their respective provinces, recruiting their subcabinet and other main subordinates, and serving as the President-elect's principal policy advisers. This course would have the advantage of producing "an administration" with the greatest speed and possibly would facilitate the transfer of control at the department and agency level. Its consequences might also include a considerable devolution of power from the President-elect and his previous personal advisers to some as yet untested departmental appointees. Its feasibility might depend, among other things, on the completeness with which the earlier personnel staff work has been done, the President-elect's choice of leadership strategies, and his readiness to resolve the factional issues implicit in key personnel choices.

The opposite way of proceeding would be for the President-elect to choose at the outset only a handful of the top officials who will have an especially close relationship with him, such as the head of his White House staff, the Director of the Budget, and perhaps an assistant for national security matters. The tasks of establishing contact with the outgoing administration, gathering information, and formulating recommendations for early policy actions could be centralized in these people, supplemented by staff or subcabinet level persons assigned directly by the President-elect to liaison with the principal agencies and functional areas of the government. With an adequate personal organization of this kind, the President-elect might be able to proceed with caution in selecting his cabinet and other principal appointees, who could come on the scene and take charge of the preparations in their respective areas gradually as inauguration day approached. By having the first contacts with the outgoing department officials and the bureaucracy made by his own staff people, the President-elect might be able to exercise a more direct personal control of what went on at that level. He might also, under this way of proceeding, be able to exercise a little more care in the choice of cabinet members, and might even be able to have a considerable influence on their choices of subordinates. The danger, of course, would be that in taking more time and throwing

such decisions open to wider consultations and negotiations, he might in the end erode rather than enhance his personal influence.

Between these sharply contrasting alternatives, there are numerous possible intermediate or compromise courses. For example, the President-elect might designate immediately his top personal assistants plus two or three of the cabinet officers for the areas that seem most difficult or likely to require significant early action, such as the Departments of State, Defense, and Treasury. Liaison with other government agencies could be entrusted to staff members of the President-elect who might be officially designated for positions in those agencies after inauguration.

At any rate, the essential thing is for the President-elect to bring into being quickly after election day an organization that can "cover" the principal agencies and functional areas of the government, consult with outgoing officials, identify the main problems, and formulate recommendations for early action. Whether this organization—the future administration—should be built from the top down, beginning with the cabinet, is a question that the President-elect can decide in terms of his particular situation and preferences.

Organization, Orientation, and Planning

Beyond the selection of personnel, the President-elect's preparations include a variety of tasks that can be mentioned here but briefly. They include public, party, and congressional contacts; development of working relationships with and among his staff members and agency administrators; supervision of the planning for the move to Washington and the inaugural ceremonies; and coming to grips with the issues in a sufficiently specific way to produce a program for the future.

Selecting a course of action is likely to be particularly difficult if the President-elect and his party are making the crucial transition from the thought patterns of an opposition to those of a responsible administration. The change from campaigners to responsible executives, from partisan to national leaders, requires the President-elect and others designated for executive office to detach themselves in some degree from the party organization, the congressmen of their party, and other campaign allies to whom they have turned for advice and psychological comfort, and begin to identify themselves with the on-going government and the bureaucracy. The myths born of opposition must be adjusted to the hard facts of limited alternatives.

The President-elect's personal role in all this depends on several things—the state of his political education, the completeness of his preparations, the amount of vigor he has left after the campaign, his personal choice of operating methods, and the extent to which fortuitous events or special commitments make demands on his time. A man whose "feel" for issues and political strategy has been sensitized by long experience (and some preliminary exercises of the sort Roosevelt had with his brain trust early in 1932) might plunge in boldly, handle many things himself, and make commitments that would clarify his intentions in short order. Another might have to seek shelter behind staff and play a delaying game. An enforced vacation because of exhaustion after the campaign, or a special situation requiring a long overseas trip, might effectively remove the President-elect from many of the negotiations and throw a correspondingly greater burden on his aides. But the amount of the top man's personal participation is only a relative matter. He needs a great amount of help in any event. The extent to which he can play a decisive role in the hectic weeks after election may well depend on the availability of several close and trusted advisers who have been studying the issues in several key areas long enough to have recovered from the shock of discovering how complicated most issues are when they are approached with responsibility for action.

One especially delicate area to which the President-elect gives close attention—or neglects at his peril—is that of relationships with Congress and its leaders. The traditional etiquette of his position probably requires him to disclaim publicly any interest in the internal affairs of Congress, to consult with the established leaders of his party in the House and Senate, and to accept for grave consideration any ideas that they or other representatives or senators of the party may have about the timing and content of his legislative proposals. But behind the façade of correctness he may have some real choices. Will he and his subordinates quietly lend support to one side or the other in the fights over the leadership positions, the caucus rules, the rules of the House and Senate, and other issues that tend to come to the surface at the opening of an administration? Will he take the legislative leaders into his full confidence, even according them great influence over the administration's legislative program, or will he keep them guessing and try to retain the full initiative? Will he confine his legislative relationships mainly to the established leaders and committee chairmen, or will he develop close connec-

tions with other members (including members of the other party) whose policy views may be more akin to his own? To what extent will he admit congressional influence over matters of personnel, organization, or policy within the Executive Branch? The answers to these questions presumably depend on the extent to which the factional situation in his party permits him to plot an independent course, as well as on his views about the proper role of the President vis-à-vis Congress. Commitments and precedents in this period can either benefit or remain to plague the President throughout his administration.

Another area requiring careful negotiations and delicate decisions is political party relationships. Winning the Presidency precipitates a peculiar sort of crisis for a political party. Instead of the diffused leadership characteristic of an out-party, there is suddenly an undisputed national leader with a prospect of several years' tenure. Relationships up and down the loose-jointed party structure must be adjusted to this new fact. All the party leaders will now try to see the President-elect, put out feelers, and jockey for position.

In this field, as in congressional relationships, it is important to distinguish between the President-elect's public and private behavior. He may find it expedient to make gestures that will satisfy the apparent public craving for presidential figures who are "above" the details of party organization and disdainful of "politicians." But he may, at the same time and in a quiet way, decide to take as firm a hold as possible on the party machinery. If he cherishes hopes of "reforming" the party, or even if he only wishes to consolidate his own factional position, now is the time to start. He can ordinarily almost dictate the choice of the national chairman and, through him, influence the personnel and activities of the national headquarters. He cannot directly control the national committeemen and state chairmen, but by showing evidence of favor or disfavor, granting or withholding patronage, choosing the leaders most to his liking in each state as informal advisers and "representatives" of the administration, and mobilizing support for these individuals in any factional disputes, he can often indirectly have great influence over the party organization at the state level.

As inauguration day draws near, it may be desirable to draw together the men and projects set in motion in the previous weeks. Precabinet meetings such as those held by Eisenhower at the Hotel Commodore in January 1953 should be useful, and if time permits, it might be desira-

ble to supplement the general sessions with several smaller meetings of the appointees designated for the principal functional areas. By this time it should be possible not only to identify the main program priorities and the general "line" to be taken in approaching such across-the-board problems as the budget, the civil service, and legislative relationships, but also to give fairly specific consideration to the legislative timetable and the principal issues on which positions will have to be taken.

EASING THE TRANSFER

Regardless what preparations they may separately make, the outgoing and incoming Presidents share responsibility for the transfer of the reins of authority and for safeguarding the public interest during the process. In this respect, the experience of the past offers a great deal of useful precedent and guidance, and it is reasonable to anticipate that in future transitions many constructive practices to facilitate the transfer will become routine. The problem of ultimate responsibility for national leadership in the election-to-inauguration interval remains difficult; while it can be mitigated by intelligence and good will, it is probably inherently insoluble under the present constitutional provisions.

In recent transitions, the outgoing President has taken the lead in seeking consultations with his successor and establishing relationships intended to guard the national interest and facilitate a smooth turnover. Since both the tradition and the pressures that come to bear on the presidential office normally encourage him to do this, it is reasonable to expect that future Presidents will do likewise. By the same token, it would not be surprising to find future Presidents-elect, like their predecessors, reluctant and cautious in dealing with the outgoing President. However, should the outgoing President not take the initiative, it would be appropriate for the President-elect to do so.

The desirability of beginning with a conference at the White House between the President and President-elect, such as occurred both in 1932 and in 1952, presumably depends on the circumstances and the preferences of the two individuals. Conditions of extreme international tension or domestic emergency would increase the need for such a demonstration of American unity and implicit warning to any other nation that might be tempted to try to catch the United States off balance. A really success-

ful session between President and President-elect would build up a reserve of understanding for use if the unexpected occurred, serve to establish a suitable climate for subsequent discussions between the subordinates of the two principals, and possibly dampen down the excesses of partisan hostility that tend to appear at lower levels of responsibility.

However, in view of the difficulties that beset the Hoover-Roosevelt and Truman-Eisenhower conferences, consideration might be given to a less direct approach. In the long run, it might be more productive for at least the initial communication between the two presidential figures to be by confidential correspondence, or through trusted subordinates, to avoid any suspicion that anyone is pressing for advantage. Personal consultations between President and President-elect might be more useful after preliminary negotiations have established the ground rules and defined the items for discussion. And if adequate communication can be established by other means, it might not be necessary for them to confer in person.

Observers, Briefings, and Holdovers

The 1952 transition demonstrated that there is a great deal that can be done below the presidential level to achieve a smooth transfer of power. One innovation of that year that certainly bears repeating was the assignment of an observer on behalf of the President-elect to the Budget Bureau from shortly after election until inauguration day. This arrangement allowed the incoming administration to become well informed without being forced to assume responsibility prematurely or interfering with the activities of the outgoing regime. In the future, it might be desirable for such observers or liaison officers to take up residence in most of the major agencies of the government shortly after election, collecting information about the agencies and their pending problems and serving as channels for any communication with the President-elect's headquarters that might be necessary. Such representatives should be of sufficient personal standing and have specific enough assignments that they can dig into the real business of the agencies to which they are assigned and not deal merely with the mechanical aspects of moving one administration out and the other in. As indicated above, it might or might not be best for the future agency heads themselves to perform this role.

Other helpful steps would include the preparation in the departments

of briefing books and memoranda for the President-elect and his appointees; oral briefings dealing both with the business of particular departments and with such government-wide matters as budget procedures, civil service problems, and the concept and mechanics of the President's legislative program; and direct consultations between incoming officials and their outgoing "opposite numbers."[5]

One area in which especially thorough briefings are necessary is that of national security. Presumably the successful candidate will have been kept informed, by the CIA during the campaign, of the general state of international affairs and any incipient military threats or other vital information. After election, such information can be expanded with more specific information about United States foreign and military policies; how the intelligence and security policy machinery operates; arrangements for detection of enemy attack; the sorts of situations in which the President might have to decide on full-scale defensive steps or counterattacks; and arrangements for emergency command posts, relocation centers, civil defense, continuity of government after major destruction, and other related problems. There should be no illusion that emergencies always arise in a way that corresponds exactly to the assumptions on which advance plans are based, but the President and President-elect should know as clearly as possible what to expect of each other and how they could communicate in a real emergency.

The practice of designating at least one of the major political officers in each department to carry over for a greater or lesser time into the new administration also can be helpful. It is almost essential to have such a person to function as acting department head over the inauguration interval when the old secretary has resigned and the new one is not yet sworn in. How long after inauguration day such a holdover can be useful presumably depends on the circumstances. It will be remembered that

[5] In 1957, the Eisenhower administration established a government-wide policy and more systematic procedures for the orientation of new top-level political executives. While this directive was primarily concerned with the problem of executives appointed as replacements midway in an administration, and appears not to have been fully implemented, the procedures established should be partly applicable to the briefing of the designees of a successor administration. For a discussion of the background, substance, and some of the inherent limitations of this program see Rufus E. Miles, Jr., "The Orientation of Presidential Appointees," *Public Administration Review,* Vol. 18 (Winter 1958), pp. 1-6. For a further discussion of the orientation problem and suggestions going beyond the scope of the official policy, see a second article by the same author, "The Orientation of Presidential Appointees: A Continuing Challenge," *Public Administration Review,* Vol. 18 (Spring 1958), pp. 106-12.

there were great variations on this point in 1953; a few holdovers, particularly in the military departments, were accepted and became virtually part of the "new team," while those in other departments were not fully utilized and their presence soon became embarrassing to all concerned. Ordinarily, it would appear to be good sense for a new department head to have available for at least several weeks someone who is thoroughly familiar with the department and its policies under the previous administration, and who can speak without the inhibitions felt by the administrative assistant secretary or other career men who must get along with the new secretary on a permanent basis. The official status of the holdover should be of relatively little concern; whether he continues to hold his position or remains as an official or unofficial consultant can be decided in view of the situation in each case.

All these arrangements for transferring information and maximizing continuity between incoming and outgoing administrations are subject to the hazards of personalities and partisan feeling, so that no millennium need be anticipated. However, such activities could be more effective in the future if both sides become aware of, and make deliberate efforts to counteract, the behavioral tendencies that have impeded such communication in the past. Newly designated officials have sometimes failed to give their predecessors credit for good faith in wanting to help them, have been unprepared to face the fact that things never appear as simple from inside the government as they do from the place of the opposition, and have generally found it difficult to accept the neophyte's role gracefully. Outgoing officials, for their part, have not always appreciated the personal and political handicaps under which new political executives labor, have occasionally been guilty of patronizing, and have been unduly rigid in their analysis of the "real" facts and "only feasible" alternatives.

The Special Problem of the Budget

The matter of divided responsibility for the budget under the existing constitutional and statutory timetable deserves special mention. As indicated above, the existing timetable, whereby the outgoing President submits the budget and his successor has an opportunity to revise it, worked out reasonably well in 1952-53 despite its logical untidiness. It can work even more smoothly in future transitions provided that the outgoing President submits a "straight" budget, that the President-elect gets an

able representative to the Budget Bureau as early as was the case in 1952, and that the future department heads and their principal assistants get on the job early enough to be prepared to do an intelligent job of budget revision shortly after inauguration day. The latter will perhaps be the most difficult obstacle. Given effective leadership, the existing procedures and the budget-making sector of the bureaucracy can produce significant modifications in a reasonably short period of time, within the inherent limits of previous legislative commitments and the basic structure of fiscal policy making.

One reform possibility that is occasionally mentioned is to seek an amendment to the Budget and Accounting Act deferring the deadline date for submission of the budget to some time after January 20—at least in presidential inaugural years. This would correct the present anomaly whereby the incoming President inherits a budget submitted by his predecessor. The change, however, might turn out to be more of appearance than of reality; it could possibly increase rather than diminish the burden of the new President and lead to a less responsible handling of the budget. Because of the long "lead time" required to work up a budget, any document submitted in the early months of a new administration must be substantially based on preliminary figures assembled by the previous administration. What, then, would be the position of a new President who had to submit a budget on, for example, March 1? If he took the figures substantially as they stood, he would in effect be submitting, and taking full responsibility for, a budget he did not know much about. If he and his associates tried to do a full-scale revision in such a short time, they would run serious risks of bungling the job. The new President may be better off under the present arrangement in which his predecessor takes responsibility for submitting a complete document that can stand public scrutiny, and he can make revisions selectively and on a flexible time schedule.

No one can say with certainty how something will work until it is tried, but it appears to this author that giving the incoming President responsibility for submitting the budget would be feasible only if the submission date were set late enough to give him a substantial amount of time—perhaps three months would be sufficient—to deal with it. Such a change, in turn, appears feasible only in the context of broader reforms in the procedures for executive preparation and legislative handling of the budget, aimed at drastically shortening the budgetary cycle. While

many students of administration regard such reforms as desirable on broader grounds, no way is in sight to get around the traditional insistence of Congress on lengthy and detailed scrutiny of the budget by appropriations subcommittees in both Houses—a process that virtually requires the budget to be submitted relatively early in the session in order to get it acted on by the opening of the fiscal year on July 1.

Ultimate Responsibility for National Leadership

There remains to be considered the sticky question of the ultimate responsibility of the President and the President-elect for national leadership in the election-to-inauguration interval—a period in which one person has the legal responsibility but the other has most of the effective influence. To whom can the people look in a real crisis?

The lesson generally drawn from the experience of the past, particularly the Hoover-Roosevelt episodes, is that the President-elect cannot be asked to assume responsibility before he is clothed with legal authority. That is, the President must not attempt to transfer his responsibility for making decisions to the President-elect. He must be prepared to decide and act as he believes the public interest requires right up to the inaugural ceremony, regardless of what the President-elect's position may be.

While constitutionally correct, this doctrine glosses over the informal realities of power distribution and the governmental process. There are bound to be times when the President cannot decide what the public interest is in a certain matter unless he has some indication of what his successor's position will be; and even if it is obvious what the public interest is, he may not be able to pursue it effectively without his designated successor's support. In most such situations, the President will have to act as he thinks best and take the risk of failure or repudiation. Occasionally, the issues may be of such surpassing importance that the risk involved in letting the President carry his burden alone becomes intolerable. Then the issue comes in the back door, as it did in 1952 when President Truman, despite his assertion that he was not trying to thrust responsibility on General Eisenhower prematurely, sought Eisenhower's "concurrence" in the administration's policy on the Korean prisoners. At such times, the chances are that the President-elect makes an equivocal response, being reluctant to make a commitment but equally or more reluctant to back off altogether. While he cannot be required to act or

state his position, or be held legally accountable for his statements or actions, he recognizes that either acting or not acting may have consequences that he and the nation will have to live with in the future.

There is no apparent way out of this dilemma. Presidents and Presidents-elect will have to continue to play somewhat indeterminate roles as long as the Constitution prescribes a substantial time interval between election and inauguration. But perhaps it would be helpful to have a clearer understanding that within the framework of the President's ultimate constitutional responsibility to make the decisions and issue the orders that he thinks best, all things considered, right up to January 20, the President and his successor do share a moral obligation for safeguarding the national safety and welfare in moments of crisis, because effective political power is divided between them. If this were admitted, a President-elect who completely refused to "get involved," to discuss a critical situation with the outgoing President, to make his views known, or to make any kind of commitment, would be recognized as acting irresponsibly. The same thing could be said of an outgoing President who made great decisions without regard for his successor's views or sought his successor's support without giving him complete information and an opportunity to state his views before the decision was reached.

CONTINUITY AND CONTROL IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

After inauguration the new President and his appointees have the problem of establishing suitable working relationships within the executive branch. To some extent this involves relationships among themselves —the cabinet and the President's way of dealing with his agency heads, for example. More importantly, it concerns the continuing personnel and machinery of government—the bureaucracy. In general terms, the problem is to establish prompt and effective control of policy by the new administration without unduly diminishing the current productivity or long-range strength of the administrative system. The experience of the past offers certain suggestions as to desirable approaches and dangers to be avoided. However, much controversy remains concerning the precise goals to be sought in any future transition, and the underlying assumptions about the Presidency, the party system, and the civil service on which improvements should be based.

The Question of Approach

There probably is no way to prevent an administration coming in after a party overturn from suspecting that the executive branch badly needs reconstruction and that the upper level career men are unduly committed to the policies of the previous administration. The longer the interval since the last overturn, the stronger such feelings are likely to be. Either or both of these assumptions may, of course, be true in some degree; career men sometimes do become strongly committed to particular policies in their area of competence. However, the record of previous transitions indicates that new administrations persistently tend to underestimate the responsiveness of the civil servants as individuals and the leverage that is now available to them through such devices as the budget, personnel management, reorganization, program planning staffs, and the like. Measures taken to ensure the new administration's control may, if carried to excess, produce instability, impeding the achievement of its objectives and damaging the administrative system in the long run.

In addition to the obvious need for tact and consideration of individuals, establishing effective relationships with the bureaucracy depends to a considerable extent on the clarity with which the new administration perceives its policy objectives and the difficulties of reaching them. The seriousness of these difficulties depends, in turn, on the completeness of the new administration's advance preparation and on the extent to which the President's leadership has produced unity in the administration, Congress, and the majority party. The civil servant can demonstrate his effectiveness and loyalty easiest if he is given specific directions. He tends to appear quibbling and equivocal if he must assume the whole burden of clarifying intent, pointing out problems, and reconciling inconsistencies. He is placed in an almost impossible position if the party platform, the policy statements of the President, the preferences of key members of Congress, and the views of his agency head go in different directions.

Of course the possibilities of error are not all on the side of the new political appointees. Bureaucrats have their own obligation to be sympathetic to the new leaders' problems, candid in discussing situations within their agencies, and flexible in adapting to new policy directions. Soul-searching since 1953 seems to have convinced some members of the upper bureaucracy that they were not entirely blameless in this respect

during the last turnover. On the whole, the years since then have produced some useful retrospective analyses by both political executives and career men.[6] If the next party overturn occurs before this experience is too long forgotten, there should be more realistic expectations on both sides than there were in 1953.

Policy, Patronage, and the Civil Service

Even if the pre-inaugural recruiting is unusually effective, the administration gets off to a brisk start, and the civil service is potentially responsive, personnel problems tend to persist for the first several months of a new administration. There are three closely related problems.

The first problem is recruiting political executives, which has already been referred to as a matter on which planning might begin before election day. A substantial number of clearly political, relatively high policy-making posts—many of them presidential appointments—are likely to be still unassigned as of inauguration day. This group would include any remaining undersecretaryships or assistant secretaryships, heads and assistant heads of independent agencies, chiefs of some of the major bureaus, commissioners of regulatory agencies, and miscellaneous policy aides and special assistants around the heads of the departments. These posts will need to be filled by the new administration in almost all cases; many of them will be vacant. Considerations of policy control, party unity, legislative achievement, and administrative effectiveness tend to make conflicting demands. The need is to establish quickly a set of criteria and procedures that will get these posts filled without undue delay and controversy among the affected interests—the White House, the department heads, the national party headquarters, and the Senate. It is probably impossible to eliminate frictions altogether, but by promptly and firmly establishing the ground rules and with the aid of skillful staff recruiting, the President can maximize quality and policy control while minimizing party conflict.

The second problem is to determine in which positions the administration needs to make changes for the sake of policy control. The positions in which any new administration clearly needs to place its own appointees shades off into a much less definable group. At any given time

[6] For example, see a report on a Brookings round table series in which both political and career executives participated: Marver H. Bernstein, *The Job of the Federal Executive* (1958), especially Chap. 8.

there are likely to be several hundred officials in the executive branch whose personal histories and unofficial standing do not completely jibe with their official status and responsibilities, and who therefore fall somewhere between the categories of political appointee and career executive as they are ordinarily understood. Included are presidential appointees who, by long tenure or service under both parties, have come to be considered "nonpolitical"; miscellaneous administrators and advisors recruited from outside the government for program *expertise* rather than partisan affiliation; former civil servants who have "crossed the line" into political territory; and others who remain at least nominally in the career service, but who have risen to positions of policy significance and some political visibility as bureau chiefs and their deputies, aides and advisors to high political officers, and so forth. The longer an administration has been in power the more such officials of ambiguous status there are likely to be.[7] The handling of officials of this type caused major difficulties in 1953 and remains a serious problem for future transitions.

In the short run, there seems to be no alternative except for the President and the department heads to consider each such case on its merits, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of change in terms of such factors as how the new administration wishes to use the position, the incumbent's amenability to the policy leads of the new administration, the kind of replacement who might be secured, the political effects on the relevant interest groups, and the administrative effects within the agency or bureau concerned. As the 1953 experience demonstrated, officials of this kind *can* be replaced, regardless of their formal appointment status, if the new administration is determined to do so. The question is what is gained or lost in each instance. From the presidential viewpoint the losses may quickly outweigh the gains unless the political recruiting is done skillfully enough to accommodate congressional and interest group pressures and still overcome the perennial shortage of executives with both political and program qualifications.

The ability of the incoming administration to control positions of this type was somewhat strengthened during the 1953 transition by the establishment of Civil Service Schedule C, which now consists of approximately 1,200 nonpresidential positions of "confidential or policy deter-

[7] For a discussion of this constant tendency of the system to produce appointees of ambiguous status, see Paul T. David and Ross Pollock, *Executives for Government* (1957, Reprinted with Supplement 1958), especially Chap. 5, "The Line between Political and Nonpolitical Appointments."

mining character," in which agency heads have almost unlimited discretion in appointments and considerable freedom to make removals. Whether Schedule C conveyed to the agency heads much authority that they did not already have in one way or another is doubtful, but the order has significance as a declaration of the legitimacy of the agency head's interest in determining who shall occupy politically responsible positions.

However, the evolution of Schedule C since 1953 has led to uncertainty about the extent to which appointees in that category should or would be replaced on a change of administrations. Almost 500 of the 1,200 Schedule C positions are at grades GS 12 and below, being personal secretaries, chauffeurs, and other relatively low-ranking confidential aides to high officials. Only a minority of the incumbents of Schedule C positions appear to be "political appointees" in the usual sense, having been brought into the government by the Eisenhower administration, often through party channels, to occupy posts as political assistants and advisers at the department or bureau level. At least half of the present occupants of Schedule C posts are essentially "career types," some of them occupying their pre-1953 positions, which have been reclassified into Schedule C, and others who have accepted appointments in this category as steps on the promotional ladder in spite of the acknowledged risk.[8] What would happen to officials of the latter type remains uncertain. Some of them, of course, have survived or risen to positions at this level in large part because of their strong adherence to the particular policies of the Eisenhower administration and would almost certainly be replaced if a new administration were bent on substantial policy change in their agencies. But the strength of others lies in their experience and all-round knowledgeability; while compatible with current policies, they may not be strongly attached to them personally and might be equally useful to superiors of different political orientation. Because of this situation, a clean sweep of Schedule C would appear neither likely nor desirable.

The establishment of Schedule C left at least two problems unsolved. One arises from the fact that incumbents of Schedule C who are veterans retain their rights under the veterans preference laws, which make re-

[8] As of March 1960, only 18 per cent of the incumbents of Schedule C positions had entered those positions from outside the government; 37 per cent had come from positions in one of the excepted branches of the service; 44 per cent had come from the competitive service; and 1 per cent had come from the military service. U. S. Civil Service Commission, August 1960.

moval procedurally difficult, so that the administration's freedom of action with respect to many of these posts is partly illusory. The other is the fact that neither the order establishing Schedule C nor any other part of the federal personnel system makes adequate provision for utilizing elsewhere in the government those career men who are replaced for policy reasons. They are dependent on the interest of the department heads in finding places for them, and on the availability of governmental positions generally—both highly uncertain at times of transition, as the historical experience indicates. If Schedule C remains in effect in substantially its present form, it is to be hoped that an informal practice of finding appropriate alternative positions for the victims of policy conflict can be developed.

In the aftermath of the Truman-Eisenhower transition, the second Hoover Commission, in an effort to provide both career protection and greater flexibility in assignments for high-ranking civil servants, recommended the establishment of a Senior Civil Service. This was to be a corps of several thousand experienced men of warranted competence and party neutrality, who would have guaranteed personal rank and tenure in the service as a whole but would agree to accept reassignment anywhere in the government. At a time of transition, the new administration could shuffle the assignments of this group in the interest of policy control but would not force individuals out of the government or replace them with outside political appointees. After lengthy debate about the feasibility and desirability of this plan, both inside and outside of the government, the Eisenhower administration announced, in March 1958, the establishment of a Career Executive Program that was to carry out a scheme with some resemblance to, but much less comprehensive than, the original proposal.[9] Even this limited plan, however, was announced without congressional approval and was soon stifled by the device of an appropriations rider that forbade any use of funds for the Career Executive Board that had been established to administer the program.[10] Thus, except for Schedule C (which really changed things much less than is generally realized), the situation remains largely as it was before 1953. The next, or some future, administration may wish to make further efforts to estab-

[9] Executive Order 10758 (Mar. 4, 1958). David and Pollock, *op. cit.*, contains an extended analysis and commentary on the senior civil service proposal and various alternative means of achieving similar objectives. The 1958 reprinting of this book includes, pp. 171-79, a supplement with a summary of the career executives program, the text of Executive Order 10758, and accompanying announcements and reports. The origins, rise, and fall of the career executives program are described in George A. Graham, *America's Capacity to Govern* (1960), pp. 113-20.

[10] *Independent Offices Appropriation Act, 1960*, 73 Stat. 501 (1959).

lish a more rational system providing both adequate policy control and appropriate status and flexibility in assignments for members of the upper career service. The advent of a new administration would offer a favorable opportunity for such a reform in the sense that steps could be taken to strengthen the status of the senior career men without arousing charges that the administration was trying to protect or "cover" its own favorites. The risk would be that in the climate of a turnover, a new administration might be unduly susceptible to patronage pressures, or might overestimate the positions needed for outside appointees in order to gain control, and therefore take steps that would unduly weaken the position of the higher civil service.

Cutting across the questions of political executive recruiting and determining the positions needed for policy control is a third major transition problem in the personnel field—patronage. The problem has at least two facets. One is to establish a procedure for filling the traditional patronage posts in a way that maintains decent standards of competence, minimizes intra-party conflict, and insofar as possible, produces appointees who will work in the interests of the administration rather than of other political sponsors. The other facet of the problem is to contain the inevitable pressure from party sources to enlarge the patronage area, either by formally redefining the bounds of the merit system or by intensifying a system of "political clearance" for the filling of posts in which the party organization as such has little legitimate interest. This is not the point to review the ancient arguments over merit and spoils. Suffice it to say that recent history seems to demonstrate the increasing irrelevance of party considerations to the successful staffing of most positions in Washington below the presidential appointee level.

POLICY LEADERSHIP

Important as they are, the internal problems of the administration and the executive branch are vastly overshadowed by the problems of policy leadership in the foreign and domestic spheres. Here is the real pay-off: History will judge the President and his associates mainly by what they accomplish in legislation, and by their impact on the perennial issues of depression and prosperity, and war and peace. The relationships with which they must deal are incredibly complex and tenuous. Scholars can go only a limited way in pointing out courses of action based on gen-

erally agreed ideas about what is desirable. Beyond that, they can suggest alternatives and some possible consequences, but the choices are political in the broadest sense.

Pressures and Possible Responses

The pressures and demands on the President-elect are vastly intensified the moment he assumes office. He and a handful of others arrive on the scene incompletely staffed, partly organized, and at best only superficially informed. Their impulse is to stop the vast policy machine until they can become informed and properly established. But, of course, they cannot.

The coming of a new President is a major event in international relations. Leaders of countries large and small immediately seek to become better acquainted with him, to sound him out, to enlist his support; they fish for invitations to visit Washington, and appeal to him to come abroad. The calendar of international meetings and conferences moves forward, giving rise to insistent demands for new statements of position. Everywhere on the periphery of American diplomacy there are requests for reconsideration of policy, negotiations on accumulated problems, and fresh instructions to start stalled discussions going again. The Russians, or whoever may be the current major object of foreign policy interest, put out feelers and hint at the possibility of a major diplomatic achievement. Unless the new President has been a most unusual candidate, he has presented himself to the electorate as a potential world leader and peacemaker. Now he is strongly motivated to push ahead, perhaps to make some dramatic move that will break a deadlock and bring quick fulfillment of the hopes he has stimulated.

But the President alone cannot determine United States foreign policy or determine it apart from other considerations. International negotiations may depend on the state of the military establishment; they may involve treaties or legislation; and they are almost certain to involve money. All of these things lead back to Congress. The legislature is a swirl of activity with great momentum and its own sources of energy, in which foreign and domestic considerations meet and sometimes clash.

The domestic policy area generates great pressures on the new administration. The legislative agenda and list of expiring laws establish deadlines for decisions. Campaign commitments must be put in order of priority and converted into specific proposals. Everything seems to tie back to the budget: appropriations subcommittees gnaw restlessly on the

pieces of the predecessor's document while the departments and the Budget Bureau work feverishly to make revisions. Individual congressmen press their personal policy interests. The legislative leaders look to the President for signals but at the same time try to draw him into a pattern of consultation and prior clearance with them that may severely restrict his initiative.

To reiterate a familiar theme, the President's ability to cope with all this—to stay in control of events and make wise decisions—depends partly on the thoroughness of his preparation and partly on the wisdom of his choices as inauguration day approaches. Does he wish to concentrate on the foreign or the domestic scene? Will he focus his attention on a few issues, or try to keep a great many projects moving ahead together?

He may choose to reveal something of his intentions in the inaugural address, but even more important are the nature and timing of his overtures to Congress. In 1953, President Eisenhower made a generalized inaugural address, which was followed two weeks later by a State of the Union address spanning the whole spectrum of governmental policy. The interval between the two addresses was not long, but it was long enough for Congress to get restless; and it took some time after the State of the Union message to reduce its principal suggestions to a specific program with detailed proposals.

Given the increasingly interlocking nature of government policy issues, it may be necessary for future new Presidents to perform more or less in this fashion—to move ahead gradually, trying to keep everyone in step across a broad policy front. But there is nothing obligatory or sacrosanct about this pattern. If there are suitable issues on which he is sufficiently prepared, the President may wish to start sending highly specific proposals to Congress immediately after inauguration, perhaps passing up the comprehensive State of the Union address altogether. By moving rapidly and concentrating attention on one measure at a time, it might be easier to retain the initiative and achieve major legislation in the early weeks.

Presidential Leadership Style

The way the new President responds to the policy situation seems to depend on much more basic considerations than the state of his preparedness or his short-run tactical judgments. His approach to the problem of

policy leadership quickly displays a leadership style that tends to persist throughout his Presidency. Although this style is in some respects highly personal, broad patterns can be distinguished. The four incoming Presidents described in this book clearly fall into two separate categories. The two Democrats, Wilson and FDR, tended to move boldly, seize the initiative with Congress, mobilize public opinion in support of their objectives, demand that their parties fall into line, dominate their subordinates, and plunge ahead at the risk of inconsistency. The two Republicans, Harding and Eisenhower, were inclined to proceed cautiously, stress the constitutional equality of Congress, try to accommodate all elements of their parties, hoard their public popularity, avoid personal domination, and stress consistency, order, and teamwork. Thus the two pairs fall on opposite sides of the dividing line that students of the Presidency like to draw between contrasting types that are variously labeled as "aggressive" and "constitutional" Presidents, "strong" and "weak" Presidents, "Lincoln" and "Buchanan" Presidents, and so forth.[11]

What accounts for the differences? Each of the four recent cases seems to have resulted from the juncture of a historical situation, a personality, and the current tradition of leadership in a political party. These examples are suggestive but hardly predictive of the future. As long as the present presidential cycle persists, the Democrats may come in when the time is ripe for change, and the Republicans when the public mood favors consolidation; the Democrats may continue to exalt the Jackson-Wilson-FDR tradition, and the Republicans may prefer less dominating leaders; and these traditions may both shape presidential views and attract individuals inherently suited to them. Yet in the earlier years of the twentieth century the cleavage was not so clear—the Democrats had not yet had Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the Republicans were impressed by Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Another turn of history may again reverse the party preferences.

Nor is it possible to say with certainty which approach "succeeds." Strictly in terms of the transition problem, it is the conclusion of the author that Wilson and FDR took control of policy more decisively and

[11] There is, of course, a voluminous literature on this point, to which several Presidents, including Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, have contributed writing as well as examples. For more recent observations, see the writings of Louis Brownlow, Clinton Rossiter, Wilfred Binkley, and Sidney Hyman. It might be noted that in one recent effort, Hyman has distinguished between a "Cleveland" type who falls somewhere between the "Buchanan" and "Lincoln" types. "The Art of the Presidency," *The Annals*, Vol. 307 (September 1956), pp. 1-9.

brought the government through the transition more quickly and with less damage to the bureaucracy than did Harding and Eisenhower, thus more nearly meeting the criteria of continuity and responsiveness suggested in the opening chapter. Yet the latter two, in their own ways, eventually accomplished many of the things they had set out to do; Eisenhower, in particular, achieved great political success in his own time. Perhaps one can only say that there are different approaches to presidential leadership that tend to produce different types of transitions; Presidents and those who observe them can choose the type best suited to their personal preferences as to the conduct and ends of politics.

TRANSITIONS IN THE FUTURE

Over the past fifty years American political leaders have come a long way in recognition of the presidential transition problem and in devising means to meet it. Yet the problem has grown apace, with the growth in complexity and significance of governmental activity. It is debatable whether the public interest is safeguarded now in this respect much better than it was in 1912. Devices are probably at hand for much smoother transitions than have yet taken place, if only they are grasped, but there is no certainty that they will be grasped, and the potential cost of failure to do so mounts rapidly.

Further improvements are possible through more systematic study of the problems involved, careful preparations on the part of both outgoing and incoming administrations, self-conscious efforts to overcome the behavioral tendencies that impede cooperation, and continued strengthening of the executive branch machinery for planning and control. Yet there are limits to what can be accomplished within the present constitutional and institutional framework. While the desirability or undesirability of basic change rests on considerations far transcending the scope of this study, it may be useful to point out, in closing, a few of the areas in which change, should it occur, would affect the transition problem.

The Constitutional Framework

It is not necessary to assume that the constitutional provisions that set the transition problem are fixed forever, irrevocable in their present form. Indeed, a study of transitions might well stimulate anew the oc-

casionally voiced yearnings for something like the British system with its unity of legislative and executive power, coherent parties, stable civil service, shadow cabinet in the out-party, and immediate change of governments following an electoral decision to do so. Be that as it may—and it may be largely irrelevant—one ought not to foreclose the possibility of less sweeping constitutional changes that would affect the transition process. In the period under study in this book there has been at least one change of major significance—the Twentieth Amendment. Although enacted for reasons only partly relevant to transition in the executive branch of the government, the amendment contributed to more immediate responsiveness by eliminating lame duck sessions of Congress and shortening the election-to-inauguration interval. On the whole, this has made for a net improvement, although the amendment inadvertently created some problems in the area of legislative-executive relations.

Consideration might be given to a further change in the schedule of presidential and congressional terms so as to install the new President shortly after the election and well before the convening of Congress—perhaps on November 15 or December 1, assuming that election day and the opening of Congress remained as they presently are. On the surface, this would be a desirable curtailment of the period of uncertainty and divided leadership, and might remove some of the present disadvantages of the incoming President in dealing with Congress.

At present there are at least two obvious difficulties. One is a problem in constitutional mechanics growing out of the present requirement that Congress convene ahead of the President in order to receive the votes of the Electoral College and resolve the presidential contest if no candidate receives a majority of the electoral votes. A change of the sort suggested would have to provide for some alternative method of canvassing the vote, certifying the result, and resolving contests. This probably could be worked out within the framework of the present Electoral College system, possibly by providing for a special, limited session of Congress if necessary. It would be relatively easy in conjunction with one of the schemes that are put forward from time to time for abolishing the Electoral College and determining the presidential contest directly from the popular vote.

Another obvious question is whether either the incoming or the outgoing regimes could be ready for a transfer of power any earlier than now takes place, and whether an earlier transfer (assuming it did hap-

pen) would lead to a period of post-inaugural confusion just as dangerous as the present pre-inaugural period. To some extent, this problem might be self-correcting. That is, the prospect of a change promptly after election would undoubtedly force both the President and the presidential candidates to more specific pre-election preparations, perhaps of the sort already suggested; it might also tend to stimulate further strengthening of the upper bureaucracy to bear the heavier burdens that would fall on it under such an arrangement. But whether either of these adjustments could go far enough to be adequate without a significant transformation of the party system is somewhat doubtful.

The Position of the Civil Service

One of the deep-lying problems in the federal system that arises sharply at times of political turnover is the weakness of the upper civil service. This weakness is of two kinds. One is the limited number of high-ranking civil servants with the competence and breadth of experience and outlook needed to play important parts in the process of transition to a new administration. This weakness is not as serious as in the past; one could be optimistic about its elimination altogether were it not for a second, deeper, weakness—the political vulnerability of the bureaucracy in a separation of powers constitutional system and a decentralized party system.

These weaknesses can be and are in part being counteracted by improvements in selection, compensation, programs for executive development, and other measures to up-grade the quality of individual high-ranking civil servants. They can be counteracted even further by measures of the sort suggested earlier to clarify the roles and statuses of civil servants and political appointees, to provide greater flexibility in the assignment of career executives, and to strengthen political leadership so that the bureaucracy need not be unnecessarily exposed. It remains to be seen whether such developments can reach fulfillment in a system that tends to make the bureaucracy a battle ground for legislative-executive and party factional combat.

Evolution of the Parties

In the end, one must contend with a party system that makes it both a minor miracle and a painful experience for the out-party to win a presi-

dential election, and then gives the President-elect little assistance in forming a government.

Political scientists have often debated about the possibility and desirability of achieving a system of more coherent political parties in the United States. Recently, much of the discussion has revolved around proposals for institutional change or reform that might help to ameliorate the problem of maintaining an out party ready and able to govern.[12] Indeed, certain events in the Democratic party since 1953 have encouraged those who have long advocated such reforms. Perhaps most significant is the appearance of the Democratic Advisory Council, which, it has been said, has "some of the characteristics of a combined shadow Cabinet and shadow White House staff," and which "can provide a bridge between the party's executive leadership when last in the White House and the executive leadership that it may find when it next gains office."[13]

Whether these events are forerunners of a sustained development or merely passing phenomena of little enduring significance remains to be seen. The American party system is so inextricably bound up with federalism, the separation of powers, and the social and economic fabric of American life that it is difficult to envisage rapid and fundamental change except possibly in the wake of truly catastrophic events. Yet the American party system has changed in the past, in its own glacially deliberate way, and undoubtedly will continue to do so in the future. Clearly one of the main roots of the presidential transition problem is in the condition of the incoming party—its policy conflicts, its lack of central machinery, and its limited but extremely diverse sources of executive talent. Any future developments that should lead to greater coherence will correspondingly ease the transition problem.

[12] Several years ago, for example, Paul T. David suggested that the federal government legally establish the position of the out-party leader, provide him with a salary, staff, and access to governmental information, and officially recognize him as the party spokesman. (See Paul T. David, "A New Role for the Opposition Leader," *New York Times Magazine*, Sept. 18, 1955.) Recently Stephen K. Bailey has described the babble of voices professing to speak for the parties and the difficulty of creating and sustaining party support for rational policies; he points out certain integrating tendencies in the parties and recommends reforms to help them along, such as permanent and prominent national political clubs, policy advisory councils, stronger party policy committees in Congress, and better machinery for recruiting candidates and political executives. See *The Condition of Our National Political Parties* (1959).

[13] Paul T. David, Ralph M. Goldman, and Richard C. Bain, *The Politics of National Party Conventions* (1960), p. 487. *Cf.* David and Pollock, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-40.

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