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Problems and Personalities of the Civil Service Reform in the Administration of Benjamin Harrison

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PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITIES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM
IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF
BENJAMIN HARRISON

by

Carl Joseph Armbruster, S. J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

UP TO BENJAMIN HARRISON

As George Washington dipped his quill to sign the appointments to the first cabinet in 1789, he began the long story of the national civil service under the Constitution. Under each successive president the narrative grew in complexity, and the plot thickened as the spoils system entered American politics. The climax came when President James Garfield fell before the bullets of a disappointed office-seeker in 1881. From that time to the present there has been the gradual resolving of the conflict between the patronage and the civil service. The solution is tedious and involved, and more often than not, removed from the glare of publicity.¹

The administration of each president forms a chapter in this lengthy tale of conflict between party patronage and the civil service. This study purports to relate some of the problems,

¹That the resolution of the struggle is still in process today is witnessed by a recent work by William Seal Carpenter, The Unfinished Business of Civil Service Reform (Princeton, 1952).
personalities, and progress of the civil service reform movement in one of those unpretentious but vital chapters, the administration of Benjamin Harrison, 1889-1893. "Problems" center around the politically entrenched spoils system, the influence of party pressure on presidential policies, and the inherent obstacles to a reform movement. "Personalities" involve the temperament and attitude of Benjamin Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, and the civil service reformers. "Progress" entails an assessment of the actual achievements in civil service reform from 1889 to 1893.

Patronage has been an old, well-established practice in the world, and did not come as a foreign accretion to the infant American republic. "It did not require any mysterious effort of corrupting democracy to bring the spoils system into existence; it was there a cradle ready to receive the newborn babe." 2 However, the widespread use of political patronage found no place in the administration of our first president, even though he found the appointing of men to office a most arduous task. 3 It was in 1801 that the spoils system made its first dramatic bow on the stage of


3Early in May, after his inauguration, he wrote to Edward Rutledge, "I anticipate that one of the most difficult and delicate parts of the duty of my Office will be that which relates to nominations for appointments." --From a letter dated May 5, 1789, George Washington, The Writings of George Washington, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, 1939) XXX, 309.
American politics when John Adams, shortly before the expiration of his term, filled the judiciary with his partisan "midnight judges."

Thomas Jefferson, faced with a civil service almost wholly in the hands of the opposing party, conceived the doctrine of "equal participation" to justify the large-scale removals of Federalists to make room for his Republicans. However, he by no means disregarded competency as an essential qualification for office. Jefferson's policy, in general, continued to be followed for the next twenty-eight years, and the scene of American politics remained comparatively undisturbed by any major upheavals over the civil service.

Andrew Jackson authored the most colorful and most momentous chapter in the history of the civil service. Since his day the advocates of the patronage and those of the non-partisan civil service have been locked in battle. Four significant popular trends account in great part for the inevitability and great breadth of the Jacksonian sweep of offices.

The first of these trends was distaste on the part of the Democratic West and East for the staid "aristocratic regime" then holding office in the civil service. And there was the democratic


5Ibid., p. 43.

Jacksonian conviction that any man of the common people was perfectly qualified to discharge any office entrusted to him. Moreover there was the growing demand for the principle of "rotation in office," by which the corrupting influence of long tenure would be avoided. Finally, and perhaps most telling, was the practice of the spoils system in so many states, especially New York. It was only a matter of time until the state politicians had their way also on the national stage.

Jackson himself personified the above-mentioned trends, and added a trend of his own, that of demanding from all office seekers that prime qualification for office—unblemished dedication to Andrew Jackson. These irresistible trends made Jackson's purge of the civil service "the most logical and consistent change that was introduced at this time." 7

The extent of Jackson's proscription of officeholders has been exaggerated by subsequent generations, although the sweep was considerable. "Of an approximate total of 612 presidential officers, only 252 were removed. The number of removals would be more imposing if the deputy postmasters were included; but they were not made presidential officers until 1836." 8 Jackson's manner of removal and appointment, his substitution of "party monopoly" for

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8 Fish, p. 125.
Jefferson's "equal participation" doctrine, and the popular clamor for a change—all these have enhanced the magnitude of Jackson’s revolution in the civil service.

However, Jackson is fittingly called the father of the spoils system in the United States. Through him the concerted use of the patronage for partisan ends became firmly established in American national politics, and even its enemies were eventually forced to adopt it in order to combat its effects, thus inaugurating a vicious political circle. But of prime importance is the fact that Jackson made the spoils system an accepted part of the "democratic" way of life. "Jackson frankly acknowledged it as not only real but desirable. Once this had been done, it was merely a matter of time until the entire public service had become one vast patronage machine. For there is a great difference between committing a sin and alleging it to be a virtue."⁹

The history of the civil service from Andrew Jackson to Ulysses Grant is but the story of the predominance of the spoils system. During this interval the number of offices increased proportionately to the tremendous growth of the nation, especially during the Civil War years. It has been estimated that "the number of federal government employees was 20,000 in 1830, twenty

⁹Friedrich, p. 14. Jackson, however, was not the author of the famous slogan: "To the victors belong the spoils." Credit for it must be given to Senator William L. Marcy of New York; the famous line was delivered in a debate in 1832.
times the total of 1800; and it rose to 100,000 before 1883.10

After the flagrant maladministration of Grant, civil service reform took on the status of a campaign issue. Rutherford B. Hayes sincerely intended to fulfill his party's pledge of 1876, but met strong opposition in the machine politicians. Hayes took definite steps to improve the service, but he antagonized his party by removing Cornell and Arthur from the customhouse of New York. As a result, the presidential plea to Congress for a renewal of appropriations for the Civil Service Commission and for the creation of a merit system fell on deaf Republican ears. Nor did the Democrats, with Republican defeat looming in the future, wish to entrench Republican officeholders by civil service regulations.11

Almost from the very beginning of the civil service, protests arose against the patronage. The first of these was an amendment to the Constitution proposed by Nathaniel Macon in January, 1811, barring members of Congress from holding another office, a practice

10 Committee on Education in the Merit System of the National Civil Service Reform League, The Civil Service in Modern Government (New York, 1936), p. 3. The figures advanced by this committee for 1830 refer to total number of federal employees; those of Fish, p. 125, refer to appointments made by the president personally. A great deal of the appointing power is delegated by the president to his cabinet heads for the offices in their departments. Hence the apparent discrepancy between the statistics of Fish and the committee.

quite common at the time. The Macon Amendment, based on the theory of separation of powers, failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority.

The next legislative effort affecting the civil service stemmed from the struggle for supremacy between the president and the Senate. The Four Years Law of 1820 limited the terms of many presidential appointees to four years, thus, so its proponents thought, preventing the president from keeping favored but incompetent men in office. However, the law could be turned to the advantage of the patronage system when officeholders, whom the president could not easily remove, were turned out at the expiration of their term, thus leaving the president free to appoint a man of his own choice.

The next important act concerning the appointing power of the chief executive was the Tenure of Office Act of March 2, 1867. This act certainly was not a civil service reform measure, but "a partisan measure directed against a particular president," Andrew Johnson. Rooted in the Congressional desire to regain much of

12 Fish, pp. 56-57.

13 "It established a fixed term of four years, in place of the previous tenure at the pleasure of the president, for district attorneys, collectors of customs, naval officers, and for surveyors of customs, money agents, receivers of public money for lands, registers of land offices, paymasters in the army, the apothecary-general, his assistant, and the commissary-general of purchases." --Ibid., p. 66.

14 Ibid., p. 197.
its power and prestige which had been lost in the Civil War, the invidious act forbade the president to remove any civil officer, even cabinet members, without the consent of the Senate, and made violation of the act a high misdemeanor and grounds for impeachment. The act was partially repealed under President Grant in 1869, and the remnant repealed in Grover Cleveland’s first administration. Though legally free in his distribution of the patronage, the president recognizes "senatorial courtesy" and leaves a great deal of the patronage in the hands of that body.

Civil service reform was actually an international movement, and its success in England inspired high-minded Americans. Senator Charles Sumner had been the first to introduce a bill for competitive examinations in the civil service in 1864, but to Thomas Allen Jenckes, a Republican congressman from Rhode Island, belongs the credit for introducing the first comprehensive merit bill scientifically designed to promote administrative reform. Introduced on December 20, 1865, it failed; but the ground had been broken for the reform that was to come.

Jenckes did not relinquish his cause, and in 1871 the Jenckes Civil Service Bill was passed, setting up a Civil Service Advisory Board to the president and financed with a $25,000 appropriation.

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Grant appointed George William Curtis, ardent reformer, first chairman of the board, but due to the president's deference to the office-hungry congressmen, Curtis resigned in 1873. Dorman B. Eaton, another reformer who succeeded him, also fell victim to Congressional hostility. No new appropriations were made and the board lived a shadowy existence for ten years.16

May 16, 1877 saw the foundation of the first of the reform associations, the New York Civil Service Reform Association. It numbered among its members some of the most dynamic reformers of the day: Dorman B. Eaton, Rev. Henry W. Bellows, Carl Schurz, Silas W. Burt, and Everett P. Wheeler. From this band of dedicated civil service reformers would spring a host of associations determined to overthrow the spoils system.17

At the instigation of President Hayes, Dorman Eaton made a study of the British civil service and submitted it to Congress in 1879. Eaton's report called the public's attention to the fact

16Carpenter, pp. 31-32.

17Besides civil service reform associations, public servants of all kinds began to unite for better government. "Significant of the new era was the foundation of such organizations of public officials as the National Education Association (1857); the National Convention of Insurance Commissioners (1871); the American Public Health Association (1872); the International Association of Fire Chiefs (1873); the Conference of State and Provincial Health Authorities (1884); and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (1893). These organized groups quickly learned to think of themselves as something other than mere office-holders; they became aware of a contribution to human welfare which it was their duty to make through the instrumentality of government."-- White and Smith, pp. 47-48.
that reform was possible and practical.

The principal ambition of the reformers centered about the passage of a civil service bill by Congress which would set up the necessary governmental machinery for regulation of the civil service. A committee of the New York Reform Association headed by Dorman B. Eaton formulated such a bill and offered it to Senator Pendleton of Ohio for presentation to the Senate. Pendleton had already introduced another bill modelled on the Jenckes bill of 1871, but readily substituted the bill proffered by the reform association's experts. Thus on January 10, 1881, Pendleton introduced the bill which, with some modifications, later became the Civil Service Act of January 16, 1883.

But between January 1881 and January 1883 there occurred a tragic event of great political significance, the assassination of President Garfield. The civil service reformers had been striving with might and main to awaken public indignation against the evils of the spoils system by the propaganda of the reform associations. In President Garfield the movement found a martyr to inspire the masses.

Garfield had successfully used the promise of patronage in his presidential campaign. For months the capital swarmed with eager Garfieldmen intent on their reward. "It was estimated that one-third the working time of the president was absorbed by applicants for office and that six-sevenths of his callers came upon the same errand. Candidates waylaid him when he ventured from the shelter of
his official residence, and followed him even to the doors of the church where he worshipped. Contributors to the campaign fund, who sought a return, crowded his waiting-room and dogged his footsteps. His service in the army and in Congress had made for him a wide acquaintance which now became a misfortune."18

Exhausted by the patronage disputes, Garfield decided to leave Washington on July 2, 1881 for a short vacation. In the railway station at Washington, Charles Guiteau, a disappointed office-seeker, fired two bullets at the unguarded president, mortally wounding him in the back. After a painful period of lingering, President Garfield died on September 19, 1881. The death warrant of the spoils system was spelled out in the blood of the slain president.

A little more than a month after the shooting of the president, the National Civil Service Reform League was formed. By 1881 agitation for civil service reform, spurred on by Guiteau's fanatic deed, had swept through the states with such vigor as to warrant a national conference of reform associations.19 This conference, held at Newport, Rhode Island, on August 11, 1881, evolved the National Civil Service Reform League, a power to be

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18Sparks, pp. 187-188. "During his four months' term of office he made 390 appointments, of which 89, or nearly a fourth, were to replace removals; Hayes, in his entire first year, made only 74 removals, or less than a tenth of his appointments."--Ibid.

19Carpenter, p. 32.
reckoned with by the politicians even to the present day.

The league's first great task lay in channeling the stream of public wrath in the direction of Pendleton's becalmed civil service bill. So great was the success of the reformers that Congress had no choice but to pass the desired legislation. To decline would have been political suicide.

The National Civil Service Reform League was essentially a lobby and a propaganda organization. Reflecting the prestige of its distinguished leaders, the league exerted tremendous influence in American politics. One writer concisely summed up its activities as follows:

The reformers realized the value of public opinion and set about to influence it by all the known methods of the day. A special committee was appointed to address the clergy and educators concerning civil service reform. Thousands of documents and pamphlets relating to all phases of reform were printed and circulated throughout the country. In the first three years of its organization, for example, the New York Association had circulated over 600,000 pamphlets and documents. Letters were addressed to candidates for governor, Congress, the state legislators, and city officers. Their replies were printed and circulated and statements released to the press from time to time. Special articles were prepared for newspapers and the press. Prizes were offered in the schools for the best essays on civil service reform. And a publication known as the Civil Service Record carried monthly statements of the progress of the reform. Addresses were made by prominent reformers to enthusiastic audiences.

Formation of local associations progressed rapidly and they grew steadily in membership. By January 1883 there were fifty-nine local associations in addition to the National League.20

20Kaplan, pp. 143-144.
This respected organization then, capitalizing on the public sympathy for the murdered president, saw the fulfillment of their cherished dreams in the Civil Service Act of 1883, drafted by the reformers themselves. It is important to note the provisions of the Pendleton Act, since it has remained till this day the basis of our whole civil service.

The act provided for a board of three commissioners, a chief examiner, state examination boards, and minor officers. The function of the board was to help the president in preparing rules to carry out the requirements of the law. The law itself demanded the classification of clerks and examinations for office. Provision was also made to exclude from the service more than two members of the same family, to give veterans the preference, and to make a fair apportionment of positions among the several states and the citizens of the District of Columbia. Those selected for positions were declared free of any obligation to contribute to party funds, and forbidden to solicit such contributions. They served a six months' probation. These rules applied to the departments at Washington, and to customhouses and post offices employing more than fifty persons. The commission was charged to keep records, make investigations, and submit, via the president, an annual report to Congress. It was within the power of the president to extend these rules to other parts of the civil service as he thought fit, and to exempt from them.21

21Fish, p. 221.
"When the Pendleton Act became effective in 1883, the classified service included only 10.5 per cent of the executive civil service, or 13,900 positions." Thus the extent of the reform would ultimately depend upon the president who alone had the power of placing departments in the classified service. Responsibility for the strict application of the rules and of their spirit also rested solely upon the chief executive. Even before the Pendleton Act, the president was the key man in the plans of the civil service reformers since he directly or indirectly controlled a vast number of appointments.

Imagine the consternation of the reformers when the notorious spoilsman and machine politician, Chester A. Arthur, assumed the presidency in 1881. Yet Arthur proved to be a refreshing surprise to the reformers and an astounding disappointment to the ultra-partisan politicians. He protected government employees from political assessments and strenuously urged legislation to safeguard them and relieve the president of the crushing burden of

22Carpenter, p. 33. Any and all employees of the government can be said to be in the civil service, but only those to whom the Civil Service Act pertains are in the "classified" service. When people speak of the civil service, they generally mean the classified service. The context will usually determine the meaning of the term. A safe rule to follow is that before the Pendleton Act "civil service" referred to government employees in general; after the Pendleton Act, to the classified service.

23"An oft-repeated remark made at the time was expressive of the opinion of those best acquainted with the new executive: 'Chet Arthur President of the United States! Good God!'"—Charles Ramsdell Lingley, Since the Civil War, revised edition (New York, 1926), p. 172.
appointments. 24

"The presidential campaign of 1884 constituted a climax to the crusade of the Independents." 25 The independents comprised a group of liberal-thinking Republicans who favored a number of reforms. Dubbed the Mugwumps, they included in their ranks the well-organized, hard-charging brigade of the civil service reformers. Disgusted with the nomination of Blaine, they swung their formidable strength, especially in the key state of New York, in support of the Democrat Grover Cleveland. Due in great part to the independent support, Cleveland carried New York and the election.

Naturally the civil service reformers looked to Cleveland to reward their efforts in his behalf just as eagerly as did the Democratic party workers. Cleveland was certainly in no enviable position as the target of "a three-cornered attack--first, from the advanced reformers, who were impatient of all delay; second, from the Democrats, who had expected immediately to monopolize all the offices in the President's gift; and third, from his Republican adversaries, who were bound to find fault with him, whatever he might do." 26

The National Civil Service Reform League sounded out the president-elect for a pledge to insure the furtherance of reform.

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24Sparks, p. 198.


On Christmas day, 1884, Cleveland responded in a vigorous yet carefully worded letter to George William Curtis that he intended to keep his promise to aid the reform and to enforce the civil service law; that persons holding office who had abused their office for party purposes should be removed; that capability and dedication to public duty should be the requirements for office; and that even Democrats would not be appointed unless found fit.27

The letter satisfied Curtis and his associates, but as Allan Nevins, Cleveland's classic biographer, points out, "Cleveland, a strong believer in government by party, never made any really sweeping promises to the reformers."28 In the classified service, only six and one-half per cent of the personnel were removed in a period of sixteen months. The unclassified service, however, occupied for twenty-five years by Republicans, felt the full force of the Democratic return to power. Within sixteen months ninety percent of the presidential appointees were swept out, sixty-eight percent of the interior department, and thousands of the fourth-class postmasters.29 The period of the first half of the administration saw the triumphant Democrats occupy two-thirds of all federal


29Fish, p. 222.
Nevins defends Cleveland's seeming reversion to Jacksonian methods with the excuse that dissension within the Democratic party could have fatally crippled all of Cleveland's policies. Thus Cleveland pushed reform as far as he dared, but retreated from the yawning precipice of party schism. The unfortunate Cleveland was squarely caught on the horns of an ugly dilemma and manfully made the best of an impossible situation.

For a while Cleveland was given the benefit of the doubt, but it was inevitable that "the reformers, banded together in the National Civil Service Reform League and controlling through such men as E. L. Godkin of the Nation, George W. Curtis of Harper's Weekly, and Samuel Bowles of the Springfield Republican, some of the most powerful organs of opinion, bent a critical eye upon the President." Cleveland, acutely aware of the "eye" upon him, extended the classified service by 12,000 offices in his first administration. This extension included 6,000 places in the Railway Mail Service, classified by an executive order of January 4, 1889, and scheduled to take effect on March 15 of the same year.


31 Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 234-235.

32 Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 59.
One hundred years of the federal civil service lay between the years 1789 and 1889. Federal employees numbered 120,000, and but 26,000 were protected from the grasping clutch of the spoilsman--indeed a long and tedious story of reform. Ninety-four years of the civil service without a civil service law; ninety years of the spoils system--such is the summary of the chapters on the civil service story preceding the administration of Benjamin Harrison.
CHAPTER II

THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF HARRISON

Benjamin Harrison was born on August 20, 1833, the son of John Scott Harrison, Whig congressman from Ohio; the grandson of William Henry Harrison, ninth president of the United States; the great-grandson of Benjamin Harrison, governor of Virginia and signer of the Declaration of Independence. A worthy successor to such an illustrious political ancestry, Harrison has, nevertheless, remained a comparatively obscure figure in the historical writings dealing with his times.

In particular, his attitude toward the question of civil service reform remains for the most part in the background until it emerges during his term as United States senator from 1881 to 1887. Nor is this silence on the subject to be marveled at when it is recalled that Indiana, the scene of Harrison's political endeavors, was among the last citadels of the spoils system to

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2 Ibid., p. viii.
succumb to the attacks of the reformers. Civil service reform simply was not a pleasant topic of conversation among the politicians of Harrison's earlier years.

Glimpses, however, of Harrison's awareness of the problem, at least as political ammunition, can be had from a speech he made attacking the Democrats. Before the Republican State Convention of June 5, 1878, Harrison pointed out to his Republican friends the high motives and unselfish purposes of President Hayes in regard to the civil service, but confessed that his own interest lagged due to the apathy of the Democrats. "That is the trouble in this whole matter of civil service reform, and the endeavor to lift the civil service to a higher plane. We cannot inoculate the Democratic party with it. They won't take it any way. (laughter and applause)"

During his first years in the Senate, Harrison secured his share of offices for his Hoosier constituents. In this he merely followed the practice of his colleagues in the days before the Pendleton Act. By August 1882, however, he emphatically stated

3As late as 1885, Harrison wrote to William Dudley Foulke, the spirited Hoosier reformer: "I would not attempt too much at once, for there is absolutely no Civil Service sentiment in the Democracy of this state, and not as much as there ought to be in our own party."--Library of Congress, W. D. Foulke Collection, Harrison to Foulke, October 14, 1885.

4Indianapolis Daily Journal, June 6, 1878.
his desire to be "forever relieved of any connection with the distribution of public patronage" in order to be free to give his "time and energy solely to . . . public affairs."  

A great deal of the pressure for office was exerted by the Grand Army of the Republic, the former "boys" in blue who felt they deserved to serve their country in the civil service as they had in the military. About 1882 Harrison was perplexed about an appointment to the Fort Wayne postmastership: "To be perfectly frank with you I do not see well how I am to get along with this . . . question. The issue has been made very prominent and I fear that I would be much criticized, and perhaps substantial injury done to the party in your county if I were to recommend a postmaster who had never seen service in the army." Harrison, a brevet brigadier general in the Civil War, felt a strong affection for the men who had risked their lives for the Union, and he sympathized with their legitimate demands for preference. However, these demands often grew unreasonable, and were only increased by the veterans' realization that they commanded considerable voting power. The G. A. R.'s bitter opposition to the Pendleton Act caused Harrison some worry about his soldier-constituents. As one

5Ibid., August 31, 1882.
member of the G. A. R. put it: "This law is fast becoming obnoxious to the soldiers of the late war. They are fast beginning to realize that it was passed as a preventative or bar against their appointment to a government position, and I have letters from many of the boys who have expressed themselves as being unwilling to vote for a man who is in favor of such a law." Harrison had, indeed, favored the civil service law, but, as will be seen later, he still managed to retain the support of the old soldiers in the presidential campaign of 1888.

In the course of the debate in the Senate over the Pendleton Bill, Senator Harrison made use of his legal training and experience to contribute to the drafting of various minor details of the bill. On one occasion he spoke out strongly against an amendment to an amendment which was designed to prevent civil service employees from making any contribution whatsoever to party funds. Though deprecating the use of political assessments on government employees to swell the party war chests, Senator Harrison pointed out that the over-all purpose of civil service legislation was remedial, and the evil against which it was directed was not the collection of money for political purposes, nor an unlawful use of that money. The purpose was "to remove from all those in the official service of the United States any other influence in their

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7Cited in Dearing, p. 284.
giving than that which may operate upon a private individual." Harrison reasoned that a government employee who had earned his salary was free to dispose of it as he wished, and to forbid even voluntary contributions was to usurp power over an American citizen. The amendment was defeated.

Indiana, happy hunting ground of the spoilsman, saw the enemy pitch his tent there in 1885 as the Indiana Civil Service Reform Association was established by William Dudley Foulke, Lucius B. Swift, Oliver T. Morton, and Louis Howland. Harrison kept in contact with Foulke and tried to aid him as much as possible, though there existed a striking contrast between the cautious man of politics and the pyrotechnic reformer. Harrison's point of view is clearly set forth in a letter to Foulke in 1885:

I am sorry I didn't see you when you called me the day of your Civil Service Meeting. If it had been possible I would have attended the meeting in the evening--the knowing from our talk some of your plans, it was perhaps as well that I was not there to support your proposition to look into some of the removals in this state. Some of the gentlemen present were very sensitive. I am thoroughly in sympathy with Civil Service reform, and do not know any field that needs work more than our own state. It will give me a great pleasure to aid in any way I can a movement to secure legislation upon that subject in our next legislature. It ought to begin with the Benevolent Institutions and take advantage of the indignation that has been aroused by the low partisan management which the Democratic party has imposed upon some of them. I would not


attempt too much at once; for there is absolutely no Civil Service sentiment in the Democracy of this state, and not as much as there ought to be in our own party. . . .

Senator Harrison kept in touch with Foulke, asking advice about appointments for Indiana offices, seeking information about Democratic removals in that state, and doing various small favors. Harrison apparently thought very well of Foulke to whom he later tendered the offer of the civil service commissionership.

The senatorial election of 1887 in the Indiana legislature marked a temporary halt in General Harrison's political career. He was defeated on the sixteenth ballot by a two-vote margin.

The Republican National Convention of 1888 now loomed on the political horizon, and though the Harrison star was temporarily in eclipse, his name began to be mentioned as a possible candidate. On January 25, 1888, James G. Blaine, the all-but-nominated head of the ticket, withdrew as a candidate. Speculation abounded, and with Blaine out of the way, the independent reformers leaned to different men and even different parties. The ebullient Foulke of Indiana released his pent-up indignation and wrath against Grover Cleveland's handling of the civil service reform in a fiery letter to Carl Schurz. Indiana had been in dire need of reform,

10 Foulke Collection, Harrison to Foulke, October 14, 1885.
11 Ibid., Harrison to Foulke, October 14, November 24, December 5, December 14, December 19, and December 31, 1885.
12 Sievers, p. 7.
and Foulke bitterly arraigned Cleveland and "that aggregation of
impurity known as the Democratic party."13 The Hoosier reformer
cast his lot with the Republicans, and then went on: "As to
General Sheridan's views, I know nothing. Mr. Hiscock is probably
a thorough Spoilsman, but Hawley, Harrison, Lincoln, Gresham,
indeed any of the others named, even John Sherman, it seems to me
would exercise a vastly more favorable influence, with the Repub­
lican party behind them, than Mr. Cleveland with the Democracy at
his back."14

An interesting murmur in the pre-convention babble was a few
lines written in March by Theodore Roosevelt, Harrison's future
civil service commissioner: "General Harrison is one of the three
or four men of whom I have thought most seriously as our nominee.
... Yet I can say frankly that I am quite as likely to support
the General as any one of the others."15 About a month later his
preference for General Harrison had not lessened: "I am awfully
afraid we are going to have Blaine again; I wish it could be
Gresham--or Harrison or any other really first-rate man."16

13Foulke Collection, Foulke to Schurz, February 15, 1888.
14Ibid.
Elting E. Morison, 9 Vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), I,
T. Roosevelt to Louis T. Michener, March 12, 1888, 139.
16Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt
and Henry Cabot Lodge, 2 Vols. (New York, 1925), I, T. Roosevelt
to Lodge, April 7, 1888, 66-67.
Roosevelt's policy of leaning toward one or two nominees while acknowledging several others as good prospects was the common state of mind of the Republicans who assembled at Chicago on June 19, 1888. "Until the convention met, it was, even to expert students of political affairs, anybody's race."17 The ins and outs of the labyrinthine thinking of convention delegates is too devious to unfold in detail. Peck has handily summarized the three basic reasons for General Harrison's nomination: "He was an excellent public speaker, a man of unblemished character, and a citizen of the State of Indiana, the vote of which was thought to be necessary to Republican success."18 On the eighth ballot, June 25, 1888, the sixth day of the convention, General Harrison received 544 votes of a possible 830, with 416 required for nomination.19 Levi P. Morton, a banker from New York who had served as congressman and minister to France, was selected as Harrison's running mate.

The exceptionally wordy platform upon which Harrison and Morton would wage their fight centered around the Republican battle cry of "Protection" and "High Tariff." Grover Cleveland had

17Dewey, National Problems, p. 142.
18Peck, Twenty Years of the Republic, p. 157.
19Stanwood, History of the Presidency, p. 479.
forced the tariff issue before the people in his message to Congress in 1887, and it held the center of the political stage. The Republicans, however, did not neglect the civil service issue, but reasserted the strong plank that had been written by George William Curtis himself for the campaign of 1884. The civil service plank read:

The men who abandoned the Republican party in 1884 and continue to adhere to the democratic party have deserted not only the cause of honest government, of sound finance, of freedom and purity of the ballot, but especially have deserted the cause of reform in the civil service. We will not fail to keep our pledges because they have broken theirs, or because their candidate has broken his. We therefore repeat our declaration of 1884, to wit: "The reform of the civil service, auspiciously begun under the Republican Administration, should be completed by the further extension of the reform system already established by law, to all the grades of the service to which it is applicable. The spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments, and all laws at variance with the object of existing reform legislation should be repealed, to the end that the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage may be wisely and effectively avoided."

General Harrison accepted the nomination officially on September 11, 1888. Keenly aware of the G. A. R.'s resentment of the Civil Service Act, veteran Harrison assured his fellow veterans of sympathy and fair treatment. He stated:

It can hardly be necessary for me to say that I am heartily in sympathy with the declaration of the convention upon the subject of pensions to our soldiers and sailors. What they gave and what they suffered I had the same opportunity to observe, and, in a small measure, to experience. They gave ungrudgingly; it was not a trade, but an offering. The

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measure was heaped up, running over. What they achieved only a distant generation can adequately tell. Without attempting to discuss particular propositions, I may add that measures in behalf of the surviving veterans of the war and of the families of their dead comrades should be conceived and executed in a spirit of justice and of the most grateful liberality, and that, in the competition for civil appointments, honorable military service should have appropriate recognition. 21

The boys agreeably accepted the General's word and solidly backed him at the polls. Perhaps they were more sentimental as they grew older, or perhaps they respected the General's abilities and sincerity which had been proven to them in the camp and on the field. 22

In the letter of acceptance, Harrison revealed his interpretation of the civil service plank, an outlook that was progressive, yet cautious:

The law regulating appointments to the classified civil service received my support in the Senate in the belief that it opened the way to a much-needed reform. I still think so, and, therefore, cordially approve the clear and forcible expression of the convention upon this subject. The law should have the aid of a friendly interpretation and be faithfully and vigorously enforced. All appointments under it should be absolutely free from partisan considerations and influence. Some extensions of the classified list are practicable and desirable, and further legislation extending the reform to other branches of the service to which it is applicable would receive my approval. In appointments to every grade and department, fitness, and not party service, should be the essential and discriminating test, and fidelity and efficiency the only sure tenure of office. Only the interests of the

21 Public Papers and Addresses of Benjamin Harrison (Washington, 1893), Letter to M. M. Estee and others, accepting the nomination, September 11, 1888, p. 6. This letter reveals some of the General's well-known ability to turn a literary phrase.

22 Dearing, p. 373.
public service should suggest removals from office. I know the practical difficulties attending the attempt to apply the spirit of the civil-service rules to all appointments and removals. It will, however, be my sincere purpose, if elected, to advance the reform. 23

The Indiana Mugwumps headed by William Foulke and Lucius Swift rallied 'round the grandson of Old Tippecanoe, but not so the eastern independents. The planks of the Republican platform repelled these liberal leaders, and the Republican candidate did not strike them as any more dedicated to civil service reform than Cleveland. Thus, as George W. Curtis put it, "I could not swallow the platform upon the shadowy chance of Harrison's improvement upon Cleveland." 24 Though split in their campaign allegiance, the ranks of the reformers remained unbroken in regard to their objectives. As Curtis expressed it to Foulke, "I am very sorry that we take different views of the same campaign, but I console myself with thinking that our purpose is the same." 25

The Republican campaign was entrusted to the guidance of Senator Matthew S. Quay of Pennsylvania, a politician of unsavory repute. 26 Quay's tactics supplied the zest in what was otherwise a

23 Public Papers and Addresses, pp. 6-7.


25 Ibid.

26 Dewey, pp. 144-145.
a comparatively quiet campaign.\textsuperscript{27} Indiana's electoral vote was deemed essential but uncertain by the Republican strategists, and the national committee took means to lessen the uncertainty. The Republican national treasurer, W. W. Dudley, on October 24, sent out a circular letter to local Indiana leaders instructing them as follows: "Divide the floaters into blocks of five and put a trusted man with necessary funds in charge of these five and make him responsible that none get away and all vote our ticket."\textsuperscript{28} The Indiana independents, Lucius Swift in particular, were responsible in part for the uncovering of the "blocks-of-five" circular; the reformers were not rendered any more benevolent to the Harrison administration because of it.

When the last torchlight parade had flickered out and the last precinct had made its returns, "the windows of the executive mansion were darkened as though to symbolise defeat."\textsuperscript{29} Benjamin Harrison had defeated Grover Cleveland in a very close election in which Cleveland had a majority of 5,540,329 votes to Harrison's 5,439,853, but the Democrat lost decisively in the electoral

\textsuperscript{27}"The campaign is languid and I personally was never so little interested." --Library of Congress, Silas W. Burt Collection, George W. Curtis to Burt, July 29, 1888.

\textsuperscript{28}Cited in Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 436-437. Nevins has a full account of this interesting political tale.

\textsuperscript{29}Peck, p. 165.
Harrison carried his home state by a majority of only 2000 votes.

According to A. K. McClure, the new president spoke to Quay, his campaign manager, after the election, and mentioned that Providence had been on their side and given him the victory. Quay later related the episode to McClure with the comment that "Providence hadn't a damned thing to do with it." Perhaps Quay was thinking of "blocks of five."

The great issue pleaded before the bar of the ballot box in 1888 had been the tariff, not the reform of the civil service. However, that did not prevent the reformers from training their guns upon the president-elect, ready to let fly with a broadside should he veer the least bit from the course of true reform. The reformers frankly expected the worst, since Cleveland had pretty well swept the offices, and these changes "would furnish a Republican administration with an excuse for regarding a clean sweep as reform." The independents girded themselves for battle, and Curtis grimly declared: "The independent press will be the most

30 Dewey, p. 145.

31 Philadelphia, John Wanamaker Files, compiled by Dr. Herbert Adams Gibbons and his staff in preparation for the biography of Wanamaker published in 1926.

32 See Fleming, R. R. Bowker, pp. 216-217. Also Curtis: "Still our Indiana friends cannot say that Cleveland's reform course is rebuked because the question has nothing to do with the result which is a pure tariff victory."--Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, November 9, 1888.

33 Ibid.
intelligent, sharpest and most vigorous corps of observation that ever surrounded an administration, but not hostile, and disposed to candor."\textsuperscript{34} Within two weeks after the election the reformer Everett P. Wheeler tried to sound out the president-elect's ideas on the civil service from Benjamin H. Bristow, who apparently had Harrison's confidence. Bristow replied that he had no authority to speak for Harrison, that the letter of acceptance spoke for itself, and that he had no information concerning the inaugural address. Bristow further stated: "From long personal acquaintance with him I feel justified in expressing perfect confidence in the good faith and sincerity of his statement of his own opinion."\textsuperscript{35}

Foulke and his militant crew declared their policy toward Harrison in no uncertain terms. "What then was to be the attitude of the civil service reformers who had supported him? Evidently it was our duty to apply to his administration the same standard of official action that we had applied to the administration of Mr. Cleveland. . . ."\textsuperscript{36} And what precisely was the "standard" they had applied to the weary and battered Mr. Cleveland?\textsuperscript{37} 

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35}Library of Congress, Benjamin H. Bristow Collection, Bristow to Wheeler, November 17, 1888.

\textsuperscript{36}Foulke, \textit{Fighting the Spoilsman}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{37}"My present gratification when I contemplate my release from the duties of this killing office is by no means lessened by the fact (as personally affected) that Hill is elected while I am defeated. I am not disturbed by the accusation that I have violated party obligations and turned a deaf to partisan requirements.
Mr. Foulke's own dramatic words: "With Mr. Cleveland, the comparison between promise and performance was most effectively made. Every shortcoming was noted; every gap between word and deed was laid bare in the plainest language possible. Every case where Mr. Cleveland failed to come up to his own standards of duty was thrown into the balance against him in a closely contested election."38

Drawing upon the Republican platform and Harrison's letter accepting the nomination, Foulke, in an address before a Baltimore conference of civil service reformers, outlined the standards the reformers would use to measure the incoming administration.39 The responsibility of reform rested squarely upon the executive, whose duty it was to fulfill the pledge to extend the classification to more departments, especially post offices, employees of collectors.

I calmly undergo the 'I told you so' of those who attribute failure to these things. But the treatment I have received from the advocates of Civil Service Reform makes my blood boil. Never in the history of the world has a public man been treated more unjustly and hostilly.

"I should have thrown aside all effort to do more than believed in the spirit as well as the letter. I know what I have done and what I have suffered in this cause and with that I am satisfied as I retire from the struggle. I hope the next man will be better trusted by those who assume to be apostles of the Reform. The cause is worth much—very much; but the people who stand ready to attribute every mistake in selection of officers to wanton violation of principle and assume to know more of the conditions, motives and intents than those charged with responsibility, are worth nothing."—Burt Collection, Cleveland to Burt, December 6, 1888.

38Foulke, Fighting the Spoilsman, Appendix II, address at Baltimore, February 23, 1889, pp. 272-273.

39Ibid., pp. 268-274.
naval officers, surveyors, appraisers in the customs service, laborers in the navy yards, the Indian Bureau, Labor Bureau, War Department, and the Department of Agriculture. The spirit of the civil service rules was to be observed in all offices; hence fitness and not party service was the only qualification for office. All laws at variance with the reform movement were to be repealed, and this meant in particular the Four Years Law of 1820. Foulke then stated his confidence in Harrison to keep his word.

Curtis' comment on the rigor of Foulke's address is revealing: "I have read Foulke's address with great pleasure. It is severely logical but I can hardly think that he anticipates Harrison's conduct will be equally so." Even the fire-tongued Foulke admitted, "I discussed in somewhat radical terms the meaning of the promise of the Republican party..." It is amusing to conjecture Harrison's reaction to these utterances of his "supporters" among the civil service reformers.

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40 Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, February 8, 1889. Foulke gave the same speech twice; once at the annual meeting of the Indiana Civil Service Reform Association on January 3, 1889; and at the Baltimore gathering on February 23.

41 Foulke, Fighting the Spoilsman, p. 48. Foulke goes on to say: "On the day this was delivered January 3, 1889 I met General Harrison on the street and told him I intended to consider the meaning of the civil service clauses of the platform upon which he said, 'I may want you for Civil Service Commissioner and I hope you will not say anything to make that impossible.' These words appeared to me of sinister omen and I answered that I did not know whether that appointment would be possible in any event. No modification of the address was made in consequence of the warning."--Ibid., pp. 48-49.
As the victory banner snapped triumphantly over the Republican camp in 1888, the usual contingent of office-seekers laid siege to the president-elect. The Republican machines that had expended so much effort now demanded recompense in the form of appointments, the New Yorkers even going so far as to demand cabinet posts.42 While not denying his debt to the New York Republicans, Harrison had to draw the line somewhere. "I have been patient, and have tried to be kind to everyone, and have thought that my New York friends ought to concede that a cabinet selection is not a State question, and that I should be given liberty in the selection.43

The reformers cast anxious glances in the direction of the cabinet, for they realized that the surest way to reform was "the appointment in the great places of its real friends."44 George Curtis felt that if Harrison disregarded Blaine and Platt in the cabinet appointments, there was hope for the reform cause, since the president would not differ much in policy from the leaders of his party.45 As it turned out, the General could not ignore Blaine, and made him secretary of state, but he did pass up Platt of New York.

43 Harrison to Morton, February 13, 1889, cited in McElroy, p. 179. 
44 Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, November 24, 1888. 
Washington was crowded that chilly, rainy March 4, 1889, as the nation waited for the inaugural address of its new president, Benjamin Harrison. "As might have been expected from him, the inaugural address was dignified, well-written, and had a decided literary flavor."\textsuperscript{46}

The civil service message in the inaugural address was not one likely to please the reformers. Evidence of the great strain involved in making appointments and of the pressure of the office-hounds was revealed in the statement that this presidential duty "has become very burdensome, and its wise and efficient discharge full of difficulty."\textsuperscript{47} Harrison went on to point out the president's dependence upon advisors, and therefore insisted that they exercise consideration and fidelity. In regard to requisites for holding office, the president acknowledged that honorable party service would not be considered "a disqualification for public office; but it will in no case be allowed to serve as a shield for official negligence, incompetency, or delinquency."\textsuperscript{48} All public officers influenced by the civil service law would be expected to obey it fully and without evasion. President Harrison then concluded his comments on the civil service with the following

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Public Papers and Addresses,} p. 32.
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}
remarks: "Beyond this obvious duty I hope to do something more to advance the reform of the civil service. The ideal, or even my own ideal, I shall probably not attain. Retrospect will be a safer basis of judgment than promises. We shall not, however, I am sure, be able to put our civil service upon a nonpartisan basis until we have secured an incumbency that fair-minded men of the opposition will approve for impartiality and integrity. As the number of such in the civil list is increased removals from office will diminish."

The president's position on the civil service reform as expressed in his inaugural address seems a retreat from the advanced position taken in his letter accepting the nomination. His commitments are vaguer, and nothing is said about extension of the classified service. Perhaps the references to the crushing burden of making appointments and the political pressure of party members are a clue to understanding Harrison's attitude. Faced with the insatiable horde of deserving party members, he made a strategic, but utterly honest, retreat. He preferred to rely upon "retrospect" rather than upon promises, to justify his sincerity concerning the reform. His inaugural is a challenge to "take a look at the record." It is based on the undisputed principle that actions speak louder than words. It now remains to examine President Harrison's actions in furthering the civil service reform.

49Ibid.
CHAPTER III

HARRISON AND ROOSEVELT: A STUDY IN CONTRAST

The fanfare of inauguration died away and all eyes focused upon the new president as he stepped behind the executive desk to govern the nation. There on the blotter a thorny problem confronted him which demanded settlement within eleven days. By executive order of January 4, 1889, President Cleveland had included the Railway Mail Service within the classified service; the order was to take effect on March 15, 1889.¹ The vast majority of the six thousand employees of the Railway Mail Service were Democrats, and immediately a new crisis in the civil service reform was precipitated, threatening the very life of the reform.

When a president classified a service, the incumbents were assured of their jobs without having to pass an examination, and the civil service law protected them from partisan removal. "When, however, the opposite party comes to power and finds its opponents securely lodged in offices which but just now were patronage and 

¹James D. Richardson ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, XII (New York, 1897), first annual message to Congress of President Harrison, 54,88.
from which its own members may have been but recently expelled, a severe strain is put upon the belief in the morality of the civil service reform; it seems like saying that to the vanquished belong the spoils." Thus if President Harrison let Cleveland's order take effect, his party would have cried out in indignation; if he did not, the reformers and the Democrats would roar. Harrison postponed the execution of Cleveland's order from March 15 to May 1. This action, taken on March 11, was requested by the only civil service commissioner then in office, Mr. Charles Lyman, on the ground that the lists of eligibles could not be prepared in time. The interval between March 11 and May 1 saw the removal of many Democrats from the ranks of the Railway Mail Service, and their places taken by deserving Republicans. Harrison's acquiescence in the sweep of the Railway Mail Service was actually a compromise measure. The service was classified, and the appeasement of the Republican spoilsmen guaranteed that it would remain so.

In April 1889, Theodore Roosevelt wrote to his intimate friend and political ally, Henry Cabot Lodge: "I do hope the President will appoint good civil service commissioners; I am very

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2Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 223.
3Richardson, XII, 5462.
much discontented with him so far." All sincere advocates of the reform yearned for strong, vigorous appointees to the commission. Up to Harrison's administration the commission had shown little energy, had been fearful of the politicians, and ineffective in crushing criticism. Occasionally it made a half-hearted investigation, but the spoilsman feared it little. Within two months of taking office, President Harrison had neatly solved the problem of good personnel for the commission.

The name of Theodore Roosevelt had been mentioned among party circles as that of a capable party worker who deserved some kind of appointment. Henry Cabot Lodge wrote on March 29 to Roosevelt: "I had a little talk with the President about you and he spoke very pleasantly, but he is a reserved person." Lodge had been trying to secure for Roosevelt the position of assistant secretary of state, but Blaine blocked the appointment. Roosevelt wrote that he "would have been glad to have been appointed," but had decided to retire from the political arena and devote his life to literature.

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6 Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Elting E. Morison ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), I, Roosevelt to Lodge, April, 1889, 156. Henceforth this work and volume will be referred to as Roosevelt, Letters.


8 Correspondence of Roosevelt and Lodge, I, Lodge to Roosevelt, March 29, 1889, 76.

9 Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, March 25, 1889, 154.
About a month later his resolve to drop interest in politics had weakened somewhat, for he expressed concern to Foulke about the president's appointments, stating that he was going to "struggle 'mighty hard' to stay in the Republican party. . . ."10

Roosevelt's friends, Congressman Lodge and Elijah W. Halford, the president's secretary, were joined by Harrison's political chieftain in Indiana, Louis Theodore Michener, in an effort to obtain the post of civil service commissioner for him. Michener later wrote that the president wanted to recognize Roosevelt's outstanding character and talents, and that he, Michener, had responded that the young New Yorker's combative nature would get the civil service law enforced.11 Halford then took up the cause with the president, and observed that he "seemed to regard it favorably."

The pleaders of the Roosevelt cause were successful, for on May 7, 1889, President Harrison appointed Theodore Roosevelt and Hugh Thompson to the United States Civil Service Commission.13 Charles Lyman was already serving on the board. Roosevelt's immediate reaction was one of surprise, for he had publicly voiced his disapproval of many of Harrison's appointments, and had

10Ibid., Roosevelt to Foulke, April 17, 1889, 157.
12Library of Congress, Benjamin Harrison Collection, Diary of E. W. Halford, entry for April 19, 1889.
13Richardson, XII, 5487-88.
in fact written the president letters of protest.\textsuperscript{14}

The reaction among the civil service reformers was one of jubilation.\textsuperscript{15} George Curtis wrote to Silas Burt that "the appointment of Roosevelt will tend to strengthen his good tendencies and to separate him from 'the boys.'"\textsuperscript{16} A few days later Curtis stated: "I am confident that Roosevelt will be of great service in the Commission. . . ."\textsuperscript{17}

The Nation, a reform publication, on May 9 declared: "The President gave on Tuesday the first tangible indication of a desire to redeem the pledges of his letter of acceptance, in the matter of civil-service reform, by appointing Messrs. Hugh S. Thompson and Theodore Roosevelt to the vacant places in the Civil-Service Commission . . . . Mr. Roosevelt is well-known in this State. He is erratic and impulsive, but he is enthusiastic, energetic, and honest, and may be relied on to see that the law is faithfully executed."\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14}Harrison's displacement of Pearson as postmaster of New York and the appointment of a city politician by the name of Van Cott stirred Roosevelt's indignation. He wrote two letters to Harrison objecting to the appointment. Benjamin Harrison Collection, Roosevelt to Harrison, March 28 and 30, 1889.

\textsuperscript{15}Stewart, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{16}Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, May 12, 1889.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, Curtis to Burt, May 23, 1889.

\textsuperscript{18}The Nation, XLVIII (May 9, 1889), 375. The editorial also went on to state that it appeared "as if the Potter sermon were really beginning to tell." The reference to the Potter sermon concerns the April 30 celebration in New York of the Centennial of
Shortly after the president's appointment of the new civil service commissioners, the door to the Civil Service Commission office burst open, and in strode an athletic-looking man of thirty-one, broad-shouldered, and with piercing blue eyes behind his glasses. "I am the new Civil Service Commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt of New York. Have you a telephone? Call up the Ebbitt House. I have an engagement with Archbishop Ireland. Say that I will be there at 10 o'clock." With these words Theodore Roosevelt started his six-year career as civil service commissioner. A week after his appointment he wrote: "I think--no man can ever be sure--this commission means business." To insure that it did mean business, Roosevelt wrote to various reformers asking their cooperation in uncovering infractions of the civil service act, Washington's first inauguration. President Harrison relived the day according to Washington's schedule of one hundred years previous. This included a trip to St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel, where the president sat in the same pew in which Washington had sat, and listened to a sermon by Bishop Henry C. Potter. Instead of the expected address, the bishop launched into a fiery denunciation of the spoils system, "not unworthy of Isaiah," and drew a very pointed moral for the embarrassed president.--Everett P. Wheeler, Sixty Years of American Life (New York, 1917), pp. 137-138. Curtis and the Mugwumps agreed upon the "timeliness and value of Potter's blast,"--Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, May 6, 1889. Roosevelt and Lodge, however, considered the remarks "unfortunate."--Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Anna and Cabot Lodge, June 12, 1889, 164-165.

19Halloran, p. 56.

since he and his staff are "overwhelmed with work and have but insufficient means."21

Never one to hesitate, Roosevelt made his first investigation less than a month after his appointment. Irregularities in examinations were reported in the New York customhouse, and as the young commissioner himself put it, "I 'went it strong' into the Custom House people, and did some pretty good work; I think it will have an excellent effect, and in addition there is some personal satisfaction to me in having shown that I did not intend to have the Commission remain a mere board of head clerks."22

Fresh from his invasion of New York, Roosevelt headed west to Indianapolis, where there was some trouble with William Wallace, an old friend of President Harrison, who had been made postmaster. As far back as March 15, dissatisfaction with Wallace had reached the president's ears through William Foulke. The vigilant reformer wrote the president that Wallace had openly stated that Republicans would be given the preference for offices.23 Wallace in turn wrote to Halford, the president's secretary, that he had been misquoted.24 Roosevelt's investigation followed soon thereafter, and on June 21 and June 24 Wallace wrote Halford again, protesting that

21Ibid., Roosevelt to Swift, May 16, 1889, 162.
22Ibid., Roosevelt to his sister Anna, June 2, 1889, 163.
23Harrison Collection, Foulke to Harrison, March 15, 1889.
24Ibid., Wallace to Halford, March 26, 1889.
he had observed the law and would in the future, and complaining that Swift and Foulke and Roosevelt had done immense harm to the party.25 On the same day, June 24, Roosevelt wrote to Lodge: "We had only a week's trip but we stirred things up well; the President has made a great mistake in appointing a well-meaning, weak old fellow in Indianapolis, but I think we have administered a galvanic shock that will reinforce his virtue for the future."26

The extent of the "shock" was not confined to Indianapolis. Writing about the president, Roosevelt revealed: "The Indianapolis business gave him an awful wrench, but he has swallowed the medicine, and in his talk with us today did not express the least dissatisfaction with any of our deeds or utterances."27 If the president was shocked, imagine the effect on poor Wallace. As late as November, Michener wrote to Halford, "Wr. Wallace was terrorized by Mr. Roosevelt and is afraid to remove incapable men."28 That the "shock" achieved its purpose was attested by Roosevelt himself two years later: "I was very sorry to hear of the death of postmaster Wallace. He has acted perfectly squarely for the last two years."29

25Ibid., Wallace to Halford, June 21 and 24, 1889.
26Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, June 24, 1889, 166.
27Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, July 11, 1889, 172.
28Harrison Collection, Michener to Halford, November 25, 1889.
29Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Swift, April 11, 1891, 241.
The pattern of events surrounding the Indianapolis post office—the complaint of a vigilant reformer, denials by the party concerned, investigation by the commission, the "galvanic shock," and improvement in the observance of the civil service law—was often repeated in reference to other post offices and customhouses.

Turning from Indianapolis, the commission also made investigations at Milwaukee, Chicago, Grand Rapids, and Port Huron. A master stroke was accomplished when the lists of eligibles for appointment were made open to the public by order of the commission on June 29, 1889. On that same day Roosevelt wrote to Lodge, summing up the work accomplished thus far. He confided that he was having "a hard row to hoe," that he had made the commission "a living force, and in consequence the outcry among the spoilsmen has become furious; it has evidently frightened both the President and Halford a little." He observed that the latter have "shown symptoms" of telling him "that the law should be rigidly enforced where people will stand it, and gingerly handled elsewhere." He went on: "But I answered militantly; that as long as I was responsible the law should be enforced up to the handle everywhere, fearlessly and honestly." 31

The investigation of the Milwaukee post office proved a seri-


31 Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, June 29, 1889, 167.
ous bone of contention between Roosevelt on one hand, and President
Harrison and Postmaster General John Wanamaker on the other.

Irregularities in civil service examinations perpetrated by Post-
master Paul of Milwaukee brought down an investigation upon his
head. Roosevelt was thoroughly convinced of the man's guilt and
 clamored for his dismissal. The young commissioner considered the
affair a test-case for the effectiveness of the commission, and
looked for aggressive support from his superiors, the president and
the postmaster general. He wrote: "We are firmly convinced that
if Mr. Paul cannot be removed on these charges then it is absolute-
ly impossible for a Postmaster to commit an offense which shall
justify his removal, as far as the Civil Service law is concerned
. . . ."\[^{32}\]

The anticipated support was not forthcoming, or at least in
the measure desired by Commissioner Roosevelt. Wanamaker, no lover
of the civil service reform, defended Paul's action and refused to
have him dismissed. In regard to the president, Roosevelt de-
clared: "The old boy is with us . . ." but immediately qualified
this statement: "But as a matter of fact he has, if not supported
us against Wanamaker, at least not supported Wanamaker against us
. . . ."\[^{33}\] The conclusion of the case was described by Roosevelt
himself: "Harrison in the Milwaukee Postmaster business followed

\[^{32}\]Harrison Collection, Roosevelt to Halford, July 24, 1889.
\[^{33}\]Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, July 11, 1889, 171.
his usual course of trying to hold the scales even between myself and the bear. He accepted Paul's resignation on the one hand, and notified him on the other that if he hadn't resigned he would have been removed. It was a golden chance to take a good stand; and it has been lost."

Lodge, who had been Blaine's house guest together with President Harrison, obtained from Halford the president's personal view of the matter. Lodge reported to Roosevelt: "He [Halford] then said that the President was ready and willing to remove Paul and had no objection to doing so but he thought his easiest and quickest way was to endorse on his resignation that he would have removed Paul on your report of his violation of the law. This endorsement was of course to be published if desired.""35

This failure of what Roosevelt obviously intended to be a show of strength on the part of the commission marked a definite turning point in his attitude toward President Harrison. Roosevelt's position in the civil service reform was that of a man who had nothing to lose and everything to gain by a vigorous, well-publicized administration of his office. Defeated in 1886 in a campaign for mayor of New York, Roosevelt fell into political oblivion, and seemed resigned to it when he accepted the post of

34Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, August 8, 1889, 185-186.
35Library of Congress, Lodge Collection, Lodge to Roosevelt, August 15, 1889.
civil service commissioner. By nature a man opposed to compromise, he actually seemed relieved to be free of politics. After a few months on the Civil Service Commission he wrote: "For the last few years politics with me has been largely a balancing of evils, and I am delighted to go in on a side where I have no doubt whatever, and feel absolutely certain that my efforts are wholly for the good; and you can guarantee I intend to hew to the line, and let the chips fly where they will."36

The above attitude of the young commissioner is sharply contrasted with his estimate of the chief executive. In 1890 Roosevelt wrote: "I saw the President yesterday and had a long talk with him . . . . The conclusion of the talk was rather colorless, as usual. Heavens, how I like positive men!"37 This utterance succinctly reveals the root of Roosevelt's lack of harmony with President Harrison; the aggressive commissioner did not consider him a "positive" man.

Roosevelt's attitude toward Harrison gradually changed within a year. In letters from March 12 to August 22, 1888, he spoke of Harrison as "a very good man," a good candidate for the presidency, and one whom he himself would not hesitate to nominate.38 After

36Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Matthews, July 31, 1889, 177.
37Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, May 9, 1890, 221.
38Ibid., Roosevelt to Michener, March 12, 1888, 139; to Anna Roosevelt, July 8, 1888, July 30, 1888, and August 22, 1888, 141, 144, 146.
Harrison's election and a series of unpromising appointments, the young New Yorker declared that Senator Platt of the New York Republican machine "seems to have a ring in the President's nose," and that the president "does not yet seem to have a very firm grip." 39

Two months after his appointment to the commission, Roosevelt, in one of his many press interviews, was quoted in the New York Times as follows:

No greater proof of the fidelity of President Harrison to his pledges to the people could be given than his support of the Commission in their action at Indianapolis, his own home, where we compelled the postmaster to dismiss three Republican clerks who had been illegally appointed . . . . In Troy, also, we counselled the reexamination of some Republican clerks who had not fairly passed the civil service examination. In Milwaukee also, we redressed a violation of the law. The President has supported us heartily, and I am confident that the country is at his back in thus faithfully enforcing the Civil Service Reform law. 40

The press interview appears to have been merely the maintenance of the official front, for two weeks later the harassed commissioner lamented that the president was giving him no active support, not even verbal encouragement. 41 A few days later he "guesses" that the president will stand by him, but complains that "the old fellow always wants to half-do a thing." 42 After the

39Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, March 30, 1889, and to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, April 14, 1889, 156-157.
41Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, July 28, 1889, 175.
42Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, August 1, 1889, 182.
resignation of Postmaster Paul had been permitted, Roosevelt bitterly commented, "I suppose a half-and-half, boneless policy, may be safe; I hope so, most sincerely; but it is neither ennobling nor inspiring."43 Apparently Harrison had been growing less and less "positive" in the critical and impatient eyes of the civil service commissioner.

After Roosevelt's disappointment in the Milwaukee case, his opinion of and respect for President Harrison gradually lowered. A year later, by August 1890, he spoke of the president as having no backbone, and as wanting to have nothing to do with the civil service.44 The low point of Roosevelt's declining estimate of his chief came in February 1891. He wrote: "I have been continuing my civil service fight, battling with everybody from Ingalls to Wanamaker and Porter; the little gray man in the White House looking on with cold and hesitating disapproval, but not seeing how he can interfere."45

Relations between the president and his civil service commissioner did not improve over the next two years. Roosevelt wrote to Swift concerning an article on the civil service reform, "Condemn Harrison by all means, and unstintedly . . . ."46 He com-

43 Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, August 8, 1889, 186.
44 Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, August 23 and October 22, 1890, 230, 235.
45 Ibid., Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, February 1, 1891, 237.
46 Ibid., Roosevelt to Swift, April 6, 1891, 241.
explained that the president was disagreeable and suspicious, that
he gave him no backing, and refused to take him into his con-


cidence. In 1893, six months after President Harrison had re-
tired from the White House, Roosevelt, commenting on difficulties
in the system of efficiency records instituted by Harrison, declared
that the trouble stemmed from "the utter silliness and pighead-
edness of President Harrison in refusing to put the question of
promotions under the Civil Service Commission." Certainly this
crusading commissioner was not casting wistful glances back at his
days under President Harrison!

There is another side to the question of the civil service
reform, and that is the president's side. To present a balanced
picture, a consideration of Harrison's temperament and attitude is
essential, for the responsibility of reform rested squarely upon
his authority as chief executive.

President Harrison was never what is known today as a magnetic
personality. His integrity was undoubted, and he was credited with
a keen, incisive mind. While reserved and somewhat stiff in deal-
ing with individuals, as a public speaker he was "a man of unusual
charm—felicitous in his remarks, versatile, tactful." In

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47 Ibid., Roosevelt to Lodge, July 1, July 22, October 10,
1891, 256, 257, 261.

48 Ibid., Roosevelt to Carl Schurz, August 23, 1893, 336-337.

49 Lingley, Since the Civil War, p. 252. Also see Sievers,
Benjamin Harrison, pp. 8-10, and Peck, Twenty Years of the Repub-
lie, pp. 170-171.
political life his intellectual and oratorical ability and his honesty commanded respect, but he was not the swashbuckling, cavalier type that Theodore Roosevelt was.

As was pointed out before, President Harrison, prior to Roosevelt's appointment, had spoken favorably of the young New Yorker, and desired to "recognize his fine character and talents." Harrison was also aware of the temper of the man he appointed as his civil service commissioner, for one of the Republican chiefs in Indiana, Louis T. Michener, had pointed out to him that Roosevelt's "combative nature would soon bring him in active conflict with such officials as were not adhering strictly to the civil service law and regulations . . . ." If the reformers and Harrison's own political advisers knew Roosevelt's character, then the president himself must surely have known. Therefore, the following charge that Harrison did not know his man seems unfounded. A New York newspaper colorfully wrote:

Mr. Roosevelt is as full of zeal as the desert or himself is of sand. But Gen. Harrison suffered and was strong. Possibly he said something strong with such dilution as is due from a good man. What are you going to do when you have incautiously committed yourself, on paper, to civil service reform, and at the same time want, as every sensible politician must, a free field for the spoilsmen? When you are a spoilsmen and your friends are spoilsmen, and yet you have set at the spoilsmen a young man who believed what you said and is not for the game. Poor Gen. Harrison! If he has erred, he has been punished. The irrepressible, belligerent, and enthusiastic Roosevelt has made him suffer and has more

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50 Michener Collection, undated memorandum.
51 Ibid.
suffering in store for him.52

President Harrison did not err, nor was he punished. Undoubtedly he suffered much from the men in his own party, yet he allowed the commissioner to remain in office. The source of the chief executive's anguish came from those spoils-hungry Republicans who exerted a constant and irritating pressure upon him. Michener wrote to Halford that in regard to Indiana, "there is a vast amount of growling here just now because of appointments--of course I know that neither you nor the President had anything to do with it, but the common idea seems to be that the President makes all the appointments for Indiana both little and big."53 In several other letters Michener reported that the extension of the classified offices would hurt the party very much, and that four-fifths of the Hoosier Republicans were against the civil service law. As Michener so graphically put it: "When they go out in the backyard in the morning and spit, they like to think they are spitting on Foulke, Swift, Roosevelt, and George Will Curtis."54

The old soldiers, too, made their demands upon Harrison, and in some instances even expected the law to be dispensed with for their sake. In exasperation the president cried out: "Can it be

52Indiana State Library, Russell Harrison Scrapbooks, I, clipping from the New York Sun, January 15, 1892.
53Harrison Collection, Michener to Halford, June 4, 1889.
54Ibid., Michener to Halford, June 29, 1889.
possible that there is any soldier who fought for the maintenance of the law who can expect of the Executive and the administrative department of the Government anything but the application of the law?"55

The insistent demands of the office-seekers greatly distressed the president, who simply could not satisfy their hunger for appointments. Yet, as a good politician, he hated to give offense by refusing appointments. Harrison's concern and weariness was aptly expressed to an office-seeker in 1889: "Every day that I am here and every appointment that I dispose of only adds to the load of distress that I carry, resulting from the fact that so many friends are being disappointed. I do not blame them even for the unkind and severe things that some of them say. It is quite natural. Probably I should have said those things if our places had been reversed; but I can only beg them to remember that in most of these cases at least, if I had done the thing that they desired it would simply have transferred the grievance to another."56

The constant complaints from his own party members that the reform was moving too swiftly, and the growling disappointment of those who failed to obtain a government place served as a perennial

55Ibid., Harrison to Ira J. Chase, October 21, 1889.
56Ibid., Harrison to William H. Smith, October 19, 1889.
reminder to the president that he must act cautiously in order to keep harmony in his party. His innate conservatism was linked to a deep concern for the unity of the Republican party. As Lodge so honestly put it in attempting to assuage the impatience of Theodore Roosevelt: "The cry of the spoilsman is ever in his ears and seems more important than it is but he feels that he is helpless to do anything unless he keeps his party together and therefore moves cautiously." 57

Theodore Roosevelt had no such responsibility of preserving party unity and therefore he could afford to throw caution to the winds. In fact, he seemed particularly obnoxious to Republicans. Michener complained to Halford after a visit of Roosevelt to Indiana, "While he was here, he was positively insulting to the Republicans he met and extremely agreeable to every interest hostile to the Republican party . . . ." 58

The president could not afford such reckless conduct, and even Henry Cabot Lodge, Roosevelt's close friend and confidant, understood the president's position much better than the daring commissioner. On August 15, 1889, the very time when Roosevelt's relations with the president were being severely tried because of the Milwaukee case, Lodge sympathetically described the president's point of view in a lengthy but revealing letter. He wrote:

57 Lodge Collection, Lodge to Roosevelt, August 15, 1889.
58 Harrison Collection, Michener to Halford, August 19, 1889.
Yesterday in the train I had a talk of two hours with the president most of which was devoted to you and the Reform. I confess I was gratified beyond any expectation (I am not so sanguine as you I know and never expect much) by what he said. The position he took in talking with me was all that I could have asked. He is thoroughly in favor of the reform. He believes that the offices should be taken out of politics. He thinks that the reform suffered during Cleveland's rule and his only hope is that he will be able to reestablish and rehabilitate the law, to prove that it is not worked so as to let in only candidates of the ruling party and to extend it so far as he can. I may say in passing that I took advantage of this to break ground for several extensions. He also said that he should urge the matter upon Congress and ask for increased appropriations. He spoke of you in the highest terms (this is exact) said you were doing excellent work, that you had shown yourself practical and fully alive to commending the system to the approval of the country. His only criticism was this, "I wish he would not have so many interviews. Actions speak better and are sufficient." I have given you the substance just as it was precisely. He has the idea that the reform has been discredited and needs to be carefully commended to the country by wise execution to show that it is reasonable and honest and not hypocritical and fanatical. His dread is lest such opposition should be raised as would defeat the reform which he rightly thinks would be a great misfortune to him and the party. This is what the mugwump papers are trying to bring about. They praise you because they must, your work is so good, but they hope to bring on a quarrel with the party which would be disaster to the reform and an injury to the Republicans and the latter is the real purpose of their lives. You are fighting the evil of patronage hand to hand and know all about it but I am sure the President means to stand by you and you must not be impatient if he does not move as fast as you would like.59

These observations by Lodge reveal not only the president's concern for party unity, but also his sincere desire to "reestablish and rehabilitate" the civil service law. As Harrison saw it, the reform must be rooted in the confidence of the American people. Thus he saw it his duty to execute the law with firmness and

59Lodge Collection, Lodge to Roosevelt, August 15, 1889.
impartiality. Acting on these premises, the new president selected a man who would gain the confidence of the people—Theodore Roosevelt—and kept him in office even though the irrepressible commissioner gave the president little respite. Lodge frankly made mention of the pressure which Roosevelt unrelentingly maintained upon the president; he wrote to Roosevelt: "He means to stand by you I am sure and he is now going to have a breathing spell while you are out West so that he will be in good condition to stand up for you in his message . . . ."

After a view of the problem from the president's point of view, Roosevelt's denunciations of Harrison dissolve into a clash of personalities. Perhaps the president was too lethargic toward the civil service reform; and perhaps the commissioner was too rash and imprudent at times. Harrison, a shrewd judge of men, accurately analyzed the difference between himself and his civil service commissioner at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference when Theodore Roosevelt was governor of New York. Harrison's comments, perhaps mellowed a bit by age, were as follows:

He [Roosevelt] availed himself of the few moments that we spent together in the reception room to consult me about a matter, and when I had given him my opinion, he said: "Well, that is what I was going to do anyhow, no matter what you would say," I felt very lucky that I had hit upon the conclusion at which he had already arrived . . . . In my observation of him he has a passion for the truth. The only trouble I ever had with managing him—and you know, as he has confessed, how thoroughly I did that—was that it seemed to me

60 Richardson, XII, first annual message, 5488.
61 Lodge Collection. Lodge to Roosevelt, July 31, 1889.
he wanted to put an end to all the evil in the world between sunrise and sunset. He was not willing to take as much time sometimes as I thought was necessary in order not to fracture things too much, though we never differed as to the end that was to be attained. He wanted to get there very quickly—I am, perhaps, a little bit too conservative and slow—but it is pleasant to have in his person one known to us all to be so thorough a soldier of righteousness and right-doing...

The passage of years assuaged the violence of Roosevelt's feelings toward Harrison, for by the time he had attained the presidency, he overcame his prejudice enough to admit that it was President Harrison "who gave me my first opportunity to do big things." 63

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62 Benjamin Harrison, Views of an Ex-President, Mary Lord Harrison ed. (Indianapolis, 1901), pp. 506-507. The speech was delivered on April 21, 1900.

63 Michener Collection, undated memorandum.
CHAPTER IV

HARRISON'S FAILURES AND SUCCESSES

By the spring of 1893, President Benjamin Harrison had completed his chapter of the civil service reform. The background and characters have been delineated. But how did the plot read? What were the high and low points of the narrative, the successes and the failures in the enforcement of the spirit and the letter of the civil service law? How did Harrison fare in the election of 1892, and what part did his civil service record play in that election?

The vital life-line of the civil service reform was the presidential power of extension. This power applied to offices which, prior to classification, did not fall under the Pendleton Act. The president was expected to use his power of classification steadily to make the civil service law operative upon as many executive offices as possible. No president could mention civil service without promising to extend the classification; reformers gauged the chief executive's interest in the reform by the scope of his extensions of the classified service. Every president since Chester Arthur has used this power. Consequently, the percentage of offices subject to civil service examinations has
steadily increased through the years: 1884, 10.5%; 1894, 25.5%; 1904, 51.2%; 1914, 67.2%; 1924, 74.8%; 1932, 80.8%. What role did President Harrison play in the growth of the classified service?

The classified service increases in two ways: (1) a natural expansion of services already classified, and (2) new classification of offices. No credit for reform can be given to a president because of the natural growth of the service, but new classifications or the lack of them reveal his attitude.

President Harrison made four major extensions of the classified service: (1) the 626 positions in the Indian Service on April 13, 1891; (2) the 140 positions in the Fish Commission on May 5, 1892; (3) the 314 positions in the Weather Bureau on January 5, 1893; and (4) the 7,610 positions in the free-delivery post offices on January 5, 1893. Total extensions during Harrison's incumbency were 8,690. Natural growth of the service accounted for 1,845 more, bringing the number of new offices under classification to 10,535. By the last day of Harrison's term, March 3, 1893, the executive civil service totaled 37,865 offices.

As early as July 1889, the Indian Service had become a subject for agitation among the reformers. Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association called upon 20,000 ministers to lend their

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2Ibid., p. 12.
voices to the demand for classification of the Indian Service. Stated reformer Welsh: "What I have seen of the spoils system in the Indian service has convinced me of the necessity for reform. I have seen incapable persons, criminals of all kinds and utterly worthless people put into responsible government positions; those who are deserving and meritorious are not given a chance."³

The appeal of Mr. Welsh and a legion of ministers of religion must have reached the ear of the president, for the Indian Service was classified on April 13, 1891. In his third annual state-of-the-union message, President Harrison commented, "I have during the year extended the classified service to include superintendents, teachers, matrons, and physicians in the Indian Service. This branch of the service is largely related to educational and philanthropic work and will obviously be the better for the change."⁴

A year later Theodore Roosevelt's annual report indicated that all was working out well in the Indian Service, with the Indian Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan cooperating. The only difficulty lay in getting sufficient applications for teaching positions.⁵

A small paragraph in the Ninth Annual Report of the U. S. Civil Service Commission for July 1891 to June 1892 stated that the Fish Commission with its approximately 140 places was placed

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⁴Richardson, Messages and Papers, XII, 5642.
in the classified service by executive order of May 5, 1892.6

On January 5, 1893 the president made the largest extension of the classified service to that date, the Weather Bureau with 314 places and the free-delivery post offices with 7,610 places. The Weather Bureau with its staff of technical experts obviously should not have been left at the mercy of the spoilsmen. The free-delivery post offices constituted the largest single extension of the classified service since the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883. It undoubtedly was the "most important extension that has ever taken place under civil service law" up to that time.7 By it, 548 additional post offices and 7,610 positions fell under the jurisdiction of the civil service law. The Civil Service Commission and the National Letter-Carriers' Association had been recommending the move since 1891.8 Harrison's last-minute classification in January 1892 after he had been defeated at the polls in the previous November recalled Grover Cleveland's similar treatment of the Railway Mail Service in 1889, when a substantial number of offices, 5,320, were classified on the eve of retirement from office.

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6 Ibid., p. 2.


Harrison turned the tables on Cleveland in 1889 by postponing
the execution of the order and utilizing the intervening time to
fill the Railway Mail Service with staunch Republicans. Cleveland
in 1893 repaid Harrison in the same coin. According to a decision
of the attorney general's office, the classification of a post did
not legally take place until an examination was held for it. The
free-delivery post offices doubled the work of the Civil Service
Commission, and consequently, examinations for the 7,610 positions
could not be completed for six months. Thus, as Theodore Roose­
velt regretfully pointed out, "At several offices the postmasters
were changed prior to the classification, and in most of these
cases sweeping removals of the old employes [sic] were made before
the examination was held."9

Political advantage seems to have been the motivating force
behind these eleventh-hour surges of reform, monuments of campaign
promises kept, to which campaign orators could point with an em­
phatic finger.10 But it's an ill wind that blows no good, and the

10The correspondence of President Harrison at the time of the
classification of the free-delivery post offices, January 5, 1893,
catches him in the act of a bit of amateur politics. A letter to
a Mr. De Pauw of New Albany, Indiana, dated January 12, 1893, read
as follows: "I have your letter of December 25th. I have no doubt
that the argument in favor of putting the employees of the Louis­
ville Canal under the Civil Service can be supported by excellent
reasons; but I have not felt that in these last weeks of the ad­
ministration I ought to do all that ought to be done in that di­
rection. It would have the appearance of anticipating the new ad­
ministration."--Harrison Collection, Harrison to N.T. De Pauw,
January 12, 1893. This one week after classifying almost eight
thousand offices!
offices classified remained so, a lasting advance in the cause of true reform.

The Civil Service Commission, whose duty was to advise the president of desirable extensions, repeatedly urged that the classification of post offices be broadened to include those of twenty-five employees or more, instead of limiting it only to those of fifty employees or more. The Eighth Annual Report recommended extension of classification to "customs and internal-revenue districts, of twenty-five employees; to clerks and writers in the navy-yards; to employees of the District of Columbia; to mints and subtreasuries; to all free-delivery postoffices." The reform press naturally clamored for extension of the service soon after Harrison took office. They recalled the campaign pledges and the civil service plank in the Republican platform of 1888 which promised extension of the classified service. Consequently, they waxed bitter over the matter of the Census Bureau: "This committed the Republican party, and its candidate in case of his election, to the extension of the reform system to such grades of the service, for example, as the hundreds of clerks to be appointed in the Census Office. The Republican candidate was elected, and it is now announced from Washington that President Harrison has decided to break this pledge, by refusing to place these clerks under the


civil-service rules, although such 'extension of the reform system' was earnestly urged by Mr. Roosevelt and the other members of the Civil-Service Commission."^{13}

No doubt many possible extensions of the service never became a reality because of partisan pressure; such is the nature of a political reform movement. However, considering the times and the record of other presidents, President Harrison can be said to have made a substantial increase in the classified service. President Arthur, from the passage of the Pendleton Act on January 16, 1883 to March 3, 1885, made 1,449 extensions; Grover Cleveland from 1885 to 1889 made 7,259; Harrison from 1889 to 1893 made 8,690; Cleveland again from 1893 to 1897 made 42,511; McKinley from 1897 to 1901 made 1,715; Roosevelt from 1901 to 1909 made 34,766; Taft from 1909 to 1913 made 58,318 extensions.\(^{14}\) It is somewhat ironical to note that Theodore Roosevelt, the champion of reform, averaged only 17,000 extensions per term, much less than the traditionally conservative Taft, and much less than Cleveland in his second term. The number of extensions gradually increased due to the popularity of the reform and the spirit of the times. Considering that President Harrison was only the third president since the establishment of the civil service law, that he faced an almost unsurmountable wall of partisan prejudices, his 8,690

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\(^{13}\) Editorial from The Nation, XLIX (August 22, 1889), 139.

\(^{14}\) U.S. Civil Service Commission, Classified Executive Civil Service, pp. 11-26.
extensions take on added significance.

Besides the extensions, the civil service owed to President Harrison the introduction of efficiency records as the basis of promotion within the ranks. As early as December 1889 in his first annual message to Congress, Harrison maintained that government employees should have the same opportunity for advancement as any other employees, and that faithfulness and efficiency in their performance should be the criteria for promotion. In the same message the heads of the various departments are urged to begin some such plan for their employees.

Two years later, however, the plan had been given a different twist, with promotions to be made on the basis of a competitive examination plus the efficiency rating. The thinking behind these changes aimed at lessening the chances for patronage within the classified service itself in regard to promotions. Then an executive order addressed to the heads of executive departments settled the matter on December 4, 1891. In it the president changed his former suggestion for efficiency records into a direct order, and rescinded the competitive examination; but left it to the individual departments to formulate what system they would use.

Somewhat later, in 1893, after Harrison had departed from the

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15Richardson, XII, 5489.
16U. S. Civil Service Commission, Eighth Annual Report, pp. 2-3
17Richardson, XII, 5614-15.
White House, Theodore Roosevelt bitterly complained about the system of promotions begun by Harrison's executive order. In the Tenth Annual Report of the commission, the commissioner testily observed that a combination of the competitive examination and the efficiency records was needed, that each department had a different plan, and the commission should have the direction of the testing system for promotion.18

Between Harrison's executive order of December 1891 and Roosevelt's report of 1893 lay an interval of behind-the-scenes argument and disagreement. In a letter of August 23, 1891 to Carl Schurz marked "private," the frustrated commissioner puts the blame for partisan reductions and promotions by the Democrats at Harrison's doorstep. He maintained that the only way to stabilize promotions was to put them under the Civil Service Commission. Roosevelt charged that Harrison "made a great noise about this at the time and claimed it as a substantial advance, whereas it was nothing of the sort, and as was to be expected the whole scheme collapsed instantly when the present administration came, the new heads of departments paying no heed whatever to the rules promulgated by the old ones. Mr. Harrison's silly perverseness was one of the reasons why these reductions and promotions can go on."19

Where the hotheaded commissioner failed, was to credit

19Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt to Schurz, August 23, 1891, 337.
Harrison with establishing the first system of promotions based upon merit rather than partisanship. The first system is not always the best, but at least a beginning had been made, and Harrison was responsible for it.

Another facet of the civil service law in its effort to free the service from partisanship was the forbidding of forced contributions by officeholders to political campaign funds. The commission under Roosevelt labored at this herculean task incessantly. The *Seventh Annual Report* recommended that the scope of the law be broadened so that no one at any time or place could solicit government employees for political contributions. The law originally provided that no person in government employ could solicit contributions inside a government building. Even with such a limited area in which to press the law, the commission reported an optimistic picture: "Occasionally weak clerks are coerced into making contributions which they do not desire to make, but undoubtedly any clerk or other Government employee of manly character is now safe from being forced to make political contributions."\(^{20}\)

Either the picture was not actually so optimistic or the clerks lacked manliness, for Theodore Roosevelt wrote in a discouraged vein after the election of 1892: "I did all I could to stop the collection of political assessments, and have the profound gratification of knowing that there is no man more bitterly dis-

liked by many of the men in my own party."21 At any rate, the politicians encountered a force not felt before the civil service law and the fire-eating commissioner.

The indispensable right hand of the president in the administration of the civil service law was, of course, the Civil Service Commission. Any president who expected to advance the reform must show himself disposed to support the commission with his actions and prestige, and more practically, by funds appropriated by the Congress. The growing infant is always hungry, and the young Civil Service Commission of Harrison’s day was no exception. Every annual report from 1889 to 1893 begged for increased appropriations to improve the efficiency of the commission and to keep abreast of the expanding classified service.22 In his first annual message to Congress, the president recommended that additional appropriations be voted due to the recent classification of the Railway Mail Service.23 At that time the commission was operating on $35,000 a year and asked for $53,000.24

A central board of examiners to correct the civil service exams held throughout the country was the goal of the efficiency-minded Theodore Roosevelt. The commission lacked sufficient funds

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21 Foulke Collection, Roosevelt to Schurz, December 5, 1892.

22 U.S. Civil Service Commission, Sixth Annual Report, p. 1; Seventh Annual Report, p. 22; Eighth Annual Report, pp. 8-9; Ninth Annual Report, p. 9; and Tenth Annual Report, pp. 7-8.

23 Richardson, XII, 5488.

24 U.S. Civil Service Commission, Sixth Annual Report, p. 3.
for such a permanent board, and local boards of examiners, serving without pay or detailed from other government jobs, had been handling most of the correcting of papers. Such a makeshift method left loopholes for incompetency, over-hastiness, and political influence. In 1890 Roosevelt outlined the plan for the central board of examiners, asking $21,000 from Congress. In 1893 the tenacious commissioner was still found pleading for funds to establish the board.25

Still another request, not involving funds, failed to gain recognition during Harrison's administration. In 1889 the commission stated that in order to conduct investigations into alleged violations of the law, for which it was empowered by Congress, it needed the power to administer oaths. Congress failed to heed this annual plea, for in 1893 Roosevelt was found wearily repeating the same request.26

Since these reiterated petitions of the commission for more funds and for power to administer oaths were never satisfactorily answered, it follows that the president was either unwilling or unable to see to their fulfillment. Perhaps he was unwilling, lest the label of "reformer" cling to him too tightly; perhaps unable, because of Congressional opposition to civil service, especially among his own party. At any rate, he did little to force the hand of Congress, and the infant commission still wailed for its food.

While the Civil Service Commission struggled to maintain efficiency with its limited budget, President Harrison, upon entering the White House, took up the onerous task of making the necessary appointments. For his postmaster general he selected John Wanamaker, wealthy Philadelphia merchant who had contributed heavily to the party war chest during the campaign. As first assistant to Wanamaker, J. S. Clarkson, a notorious spoilsman, received the appointment. The postmaster of New York, H. G. Pearson, a Republican who had weathered even the Democratic regime of Cleveland, was removed, along with Silas Burt, a man of unblemished reputation who had filled the post of surveyor of the port. Leverett Saltonstall likewise departed from his post of collector of customs at Boston where he had served faithfully. These appointments and removals bitterly angered the Mugwumps and the civil service reformers.27

With spoilsman Clarkson as patronage officer leading the way, the victors of 1888 swiftly made off with the spoils. From March 4, 1889 to March 4, 1890, removals in fourth class post offices alone totalled 12,099.28 Clarkson revived the principle of rotation in office upon expiration of four years' service. By April 1890, total removals reached the sum of 35,800.29 These figures include both classified and unclassified positions, the

27Stewart, National Civil Service Reform League, p. 53.
28Harrison Collection, memorandum dated March 6, 1890.
29Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 224.
latter forming the majority.

Imagine how the above statistics jarred and jolted the sensitive souls of the civil service reformers! George William Curtis aptly summed up their reaction in a succinct remark to the sacked Silas Burt. Wrote Curtis: "I see nothing different in the proceedings at Washington from one under Jackson's administration except that he began it."30 A few weeks later Curtis plaintively wrote again to Burt: "I think that Swift and Foulke must be a little amazed at the massacre of reform which is going on and Roosevelt and Howe now probably see that the Republican zeal for Civil Service reform is as hot as that for high license. It is the object of reform to prevent precisely what Harrison is doing."31

But what were the thoughts that coursed through the harassed brain of the chief executive as he made scores of enemies among the reformers and the rejected with every new appointment? The words of the Republican platform of 1888 echoed in his ears: "The spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments . . . ."32 And with the reflective knowledge of hard experience he must have recalled the words he himself penned in accepting that platform: "I know the practical difficulties attending the attempt to apply the spirit of the civil-service

30 Burt Collection, Curtis to Burt, March 15, 1889.
31 Ibid., Curtis to Burt, April 8, 1889.
32 Porter, National Party Platforms, pp. 151-152.
rules to all appointments and removals."\textsuperscript{33}

Harrison was not the man to go back on his word, and as the reports of the Civil Service Commission indicate, the reform was faithfully observed in the classified offices.\textsuperscript{34} The president, however, is not only chief executive of his country, but also head of his political party. The six-year-old civil service reform was as a David to the Goliath of ninety-four years of the spoils system, and did not even possess a weapon comparable to the sling-shot. Politics would have to be played, as the president frankly admitted to Senator McCullum of Illinois: "I do not conceal the fact that, after the essential of fitness is secured, I have a desire to please our party friends in these selections; but I cannot escape the responsibility for the appointments, and must therefore insist upon full information about the persons presented, and upon my ultimate right, in all kindness to everybody, to decide upon what must be done. It would be very gratifying to me if the responsibility were placed upon someone else."\textsuperscript{35} Life in the White House in 1889 definitely was not the same as during the Jackson

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Public Papers and Addresses}, pp. 6-7.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{U. S. Civil Service Commission, Seventh Annual Report}, pp. 5-9.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Harrison Collection, Harrison to Shelby McCullum, October 24, 1889}. An interesting insight into Harrison's attitude towards appointments is afforded in his first annual message to Congress: "... it is not true that incumbency is a conclusive argument for continuance in office. Impartiality, moderation, fidelity to public duty, and a good attainment in the discharge of it must be added before the argument is complete."--Richardson, XII, 5489.
era, the civil service reformers notwithstanding.

The attitude of the Indiana Republicans towards civil service was mirrored in the Indianapolis Journal. In an editorial written in October, 1891, the Journal pointed out that although "it is calculated to make Republicans pretty tired to see Democrats holding office under a Republican administration," nevertheless, "The civil-service law is a law, and as long as it remains on the statute-books it must be obeyed."36 After discussing the pros and cons of the law in relation to the distribution of patronage, the editorial confidently concluded: "It is our opinion that by the time President Harrison's term expires it will be hard to find a Democrat holding office, unless it is a clerkship under the civil-service law or some cross-roads country post office that no Republican wants. And this result will be reached without any scandal and without violating the spirit of the civil-service law."37 Such were the aspirations of the party faithful which President Harrison was expected to fulfill, and at the same time carry out a policy of reform.

The spring of 1892 broke over the land, and the thoughts of aspiring politicians turned to the nominating conventions of the coming summer. President Harrison maintained an aloof silence in regard to the possibility of his running again, so much so that he

36 *The Indianapolis Daily Journal*, October 30, 1891.

exasperated devoted friends. One New York Republican leader wrote to the president: "... there is a certain amount of practical work that has to be done in your behalf, as there would have to be in behalf of the Angel Gabriel were he running for office in this wicked world."38

The "wicked world" eventually proved the road which spurred the apathetic Harrison into action. Pre-convention plotting on the part of bosses Platt and Quay and other Republican leaders who opposed Harrison resulted in a type of smear campaign against the conduct of his administration. The fighting qualities of the Harrisons, proven on many a field in the past, rose to the present challenge. The former general summoned his chieftain from Indiana, Louis T. Michener, and unequivocally stated: "No Harrison has ever retreated in the presence of a foe without giving battle and so I have determined to stand and fight."39 The president had determined that re-nomination alone would be convincing vindication of his administration, and the very nature of his opposition made it a fight between the rank-and-file Republicans and the political bosses.

Minneapolis witnessed the adoption of the Republican platform on June 7, 1892. By June 9 the delegates still could not agree

38Donald M. Dozer, "Benjamin Harrison and the Presidential Campaign of 1892," American Historical Review, LIV (October 1948), 59.

39Ibid.
upon a candidate. Chauncey M. Depew of New York stepped forward to organize the pro-Harrison sentiment, and by his fiery oratory supplemented by the indefatigable labors of Harrison's friends, managed to swing the nomination to the grandson of Old Tippecanoe. The sweet taste of victory, however, was dulled by the rapidly failing health of Mrs. Harrison.

The Republican plank on civil service was more a sliver than a plank, merely commending "the spirit and evidence of reform," and "the wise and consistent enforcement" of the civil service law. The Democratic platform accused Harrison of stuffing the convention with his officeholders as delegates, while the Prohibition platform dryly observed of the two major parties that "each protests when out of power against the infraction of the civil-service laws, and each when in power violates those laws in letter and spirit."

Even within his own party there were murmurs that the federal officeholders had been the force behind Harrison's re-nomination. In a letter to Whitelaw Reid several weeks after the convention, the president refuted that charge. He wrote: "If you will take the trouble to explain to your Ohio correspondent that in the states of Maine, nearly all of New York and Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Colorado and others, the federal officeholders were really against the administration, rather than for it, he will see that

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40 Porter, p. 176.
41 Ibid., p. 163, 172.
the criticism he speaks of is not well grounded. The fact is the preponderance of influence from federal officeholders was in the opposition at Minneapolis."\(^{42}\) The surest proof, however, lay in the president's actions before and after the convention. Harrison was a man who had to be goaded into a desire for nomination by personal attacks on his competency, and he delivered but one speech in the whole election campaign. His enemies have pictured him as a scheming conspirator who bludgeoned the delegates with the club of patronage in order to satisfy his over-reaching ambition. The contrast speaks volumes. The president was a tired and harassed man faced with the imminent death of his wife.

Civil service reform was not a major issue of the campaign, but it did carry some significance among the independent voters. Many of the Republicans felt strongly against the law, and Michener constantly had to repress their outbursts. As early as summer of 1891 he wrote concerning civil service advocates in Indiana:

"There are enough of them in the State to hold the balance of power, and we carried the State in 1886 and in 1888 because they disliked the shams of the Cleveland administration with reference to that law. It is useless to find fault with the President for honesty administering this law—if he did not pursue that course he would be guilty of moral perjury and his administration would be attacked from one end to the other."\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\)Harrison Collection, Harrison to Reid, July 19, 1892.  
\(^{43}\)Ibid., Michener to J. K. Gowdy, August 19, 1891.
If loyal Republicans objected to Harrison's enforcing the letter of the law, the able and vociferous independent reformers castigated him for violating its spirit. The National Civil Service Reform League met in the late summer of 1892 to determine officially its stand towards the candidates for the presidency. After citing a number of advances to the credit of the administration, the reformers rhetorically delivered their scathing denunciation of the Republican party and its candidate as follows: 

"... but the solemn promises of the Republican platform of 1888 have been broken, the voluntary pledges of the President are unfulfilled, and the claim of the Republican party, however strong may be the desire of individual Republicans, to be distinctively the party of civil service reform, is not sustained by the course of the administration, and against this gross breach of plighted faith with the people of the United States the National Civil Service Reform League earnestly protests."  

The powerful independent press then marshalled its forces to spread the "protest" among the voters.

President Harrison played a very inconspicuous part in a lifeless campaign, and in fact appeared almost unconcerned about winning or losing. Concern and grief for the rapidly failing condition of his wife doubtless overshadowed much of his interest.

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45 Dozer, pp. 72-74.
in the campaign, for Mrs. Harrison died on October 25, 1892. Six million dollars poured forth from the Republican war chests, double the amount spent in 1888, but to no avail. A Democratic landslide swept out the Republicans, with even Harrison's home state defecting from the Republican ranks.

The reason for the defeat lay not in a lack of funds or competent management, but in the "... failure or inability to respond to the new popular forces which were beginning to appear in American politics."46 As Theodore Roosevelt put it more concretely, "The Farmers' Alliance is giving our people serious concern. ..."47 The farm-labor elements, an ever-expanding powerful coalition, had swung its restless forces against the Republican administration.48 The civil service certainly did not loom as a deciding issue, but as a two-edged sword, it cut the hand of the president both ways. For Harrison disappointed the independents by using offices as spoils, and not advancing the reform farther than he did. And he disappointed the politicians by rejecting the impossible number of applications for offices, and by displeasing the machine bosses in the appointments he did make.

46Ibid., p. 76.
47Roosevelt, Letters, Roosevelt To Lodge, September 25, 1892, 290.
48Dozer, p. 77.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The phrase "civil service reform" conveys the connotation of musty offices, drab battalions of clerks and secretaries, official-smelling questionnaires, and puritanical reformers. Not a picture to stir the soul! Yet in the 1880's, before the healing hand of the reform had erased the ugliest sores of the spoils system, a violent struggle raged between the able and determined camps of the reformers and the politicians. Consequently, the civil service reform "... needs only to be lifted from the category of dull abstractions and placed against its true background of human appetite and passion to become interesting."¹

The greatest source of "appetite and passion" for the time-honored spoils system during Benjamin Harrison's administration was the Republican party itself. The Republican politicians found themselves in power after the election of 1888, with the riches of patronage spread at their feet. The only natural reaction to be expected from them was observed by the Republican organ of Indiana:

"The feeling against the civil-service law seems to be growing in intensity every day, and many prominent members of the Republican

¹Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 234.
party are by no means backward in giving very decided expressions of opinion contrary to it."

The first assistant to the postmaster general of the United States was recognized in those days as the ruling party's distributor of patronage. One of the "very decided expressions of opinion" contrary to the civil service reform was voiced by J. S. Clarkson, the first assistant during Harrison's term. In 1890 he unequivocally stated: "We must teach the people that the Republican party still holds to the theory that this is a representative government, with party responsibility, and that a great struggle for party success means a general recognition afterwards of party principles and party men. . . . There is no other real question in present politics but this. Civil service is the toy of a child, the trifling thing of hobby riders, thrust in to keep the Republican party away from its duty under conscience of settling this great overshadowing question."  

Not all the politicians thought as Clarkson did, but even those who favored a temperate reform, such as Louis Michener of Indiana, were dismayed by the strong adverse sentiments of the party members. In this vein wrote Michener to Halford: "Each day, I both write and talk in defense of the civil service law, and shall continue to do so. At the same time I must admit, that, in my judgement, there are not more than ten thousand Republicans in

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2 *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, June 22, 1889, p. 3.
3 *Harrison Collection*, Clarkson to Michener, May 29, 1890.
this State who believe in the doctrine, and that if the question could be submitted to our party, there repeal of the law would be demanded by an enormous majority.

The basic hostility of the party in power towards any step in the direction of civil service reform constituted the greatest obstacle to the reform. The politicians refused to release from their clutches the spoils of office they felt they had laboriously earned.

Another influence which militated against the progress of the civil service reform was the inertia of the mass of citizens. Any reform involves change, and the old feeling that "the devil you know is better than the one you don't know," inclined the populace to walk the path of reform slowly. Even the civil service advocates saw this clearly enough through the smoke and flame of their polemics. In commenting on the critics of Dorman B. Eaton, chairman of the first civil service commission, Everett Wheeler observed: "There were some Reformers who thought his administration too conservative, but they overlooked the curious streak of conservatism that runs through the American character and is constantly mingling with the progressive temper of our people."

And even the Indiana firebrand of reform, William D. Foulke, in referring to the extension of the reform, admitted: "In respect to a much wider range of non-political offices such as consulships and

\[4\] Ibid., Michener to Halford, December 31, 1889.

fourth-class postmasterships where the ground is more debatable, as to these, we may hopefully await the ripening influences of time and a more progressive public sentiment."

President Harrison needed no super-sensory powers to realize the opposition to civil service reform rampant in his own party. Furthermore, like the reformers, he divined that the eventual success of the reform lay in establishing its popularity with the voters. This aim formed the basis of his civil service policy, which he announced very clearly in his first annual message to Congress in 1889: "The reform of the civil service will make no safe or satisfactory advance until the present law and its equal administration are well established in the confidence of the people."7

How well did the president succeed in his purpose? During the last week of his administration, after the recent death of his wife and a crushing defeat at the polls, the weary and discouraged chief executive passed judgment on himself. He wrote: "I have not reached my ideal in anything. I have been very patient under criticism, realizing that I had possibly made many mistakes. Of one thing I have been sure always, and that was of a purpose to elevate and purify and dignify the civil service and to promote the prosperity of all our people."8

6 Poulke, Fighting the Spoilsmen, p. 270.
7 Richardson, Messages and Papers, XII, 5488.
8 Harrison Collection, Harrison to Rankin, February 25, 1893.
Four years later, on March 23, 1897, ex-President Harrison addressed the students of the University of Michigan on the topic, "Some Hindrances to Law Reforms." In that address, much better than in the gloomy aftermath of defeat, can be found the norms for a more accurate estimate of his efforts at civil service reform. To paraphrase his smooth prose would be a slur against one of the most literary executives to grace the White House. Concerning the leader of a reform, he wrote:

There is a tendency to sprint and kick and tackle and to high jumping that, in the intellectual field at least, needs to be restrained. There are many things in the social and business and political fields that ought to be kicked and tackled, and many barriers that ought to be jumped—but not everything. The rush line and the flying wedge must be used with discrimination in moral and intellectual strifes, for in them the aim should not be to run down an adversary, but to lift him up. Victories in the moral, social, intellectual and political fields are won by bringing a majority over and by organizing that majority. The leader of any great reform should combine the zeal of a crusader with the wisdom of Solon. 9

In the same address, the distinguished ex-president further reflected upon the purpose that should animate the sincere reform leader surrounded by practical difficulties. The following passage almost appears to have been written with the civil service reform in mind, so aptly does it apply:

... in public affairs, the best attainable good is the thing to be sought. The professor can and ought to deal with ideals, but the true statesman will not forego a gain for good government because it is less than his ideal. He will not force into the opposition those who are willing to join him in an assault upon an outpost of entrenched wrong, because they will

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9Harrison, Views of an Ex-President, Mary Lord Harrison ed., pp. 273-274.
not enlist for the war. Every outpost taken and garrisoned for the right, strengthens the right. A house is to be built, and the man who is willing to work on the foundation should not be driven off because he will not hire for work on the dome. 10

Benjamin Harrison did not complete the dome on the structure of the civil service reform. He did, however, contribute solid work on the foundation by extensions of the classified service, by the introduction of efficiency records, and above all, by appointing a man who instilled vigorous life into a moribund Civil Service Commission. Judged by his own standards as set forth in the Michigan address, Benjamin Harrison was a true statesman who did not forego a gain for good government because it was less than his ideal.

10Ibid., p. 279.
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The thesis submitted by Mr. Carl Joseph Armbruster, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Feb. 23, 1958
Date

Signature of Adviser