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Theodore Roosevelt and Civil Service Reform

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND CIVIL SERVICE

REFORM

by

Joseph Anthony Linehan

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of Social and Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social and Industrial Relations

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1957
LIFE

Joseph Anthony Linehan was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 20, 1927.

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In 1949 the author taught History at St. Philip's High School in Chicago. During 1950, he taught sixth grade at the Simmons School, Oaklawn, Illinois. From 1951 until the present the author has taught in the Chicago Public School System. During the summers he is employed by the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare as a case-worker.

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PREFACE

This thesis attempts to investigate whether Civil Service Reform benefited because of Roosevelt or whether Roosevelt benefited because of Civil Service Reform.

The Author found in conversation with many people that there was little knowledge of what Civil Service was or what the Spoils System meant. Therefore, the first chapter is devoted to a study of the beginnings of Civil Service and a view into the background of the Spoils System.

Very special thanks are due to Father Woelfl for his encouragement and to the staff of the Newberry Library for their assistance.
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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF CIVIL SERVICE

In the United States "The true cause for the introduction of the spoils system was the triumph of democracy."¹ Party organization became the chief means through which the people as a whole could exert any tangible influence on the conduct of the government. The maintenance of such an organization took time and labor. Democratic ideals current in the 1820's and 1830's forced the leaders of the party to be chosen from among those who earned a living. Consequently, if those who were not independently wealthy gave time and labor to politics, they required pay for their services; all had to live. It was in this connection that the function of the spoils system became evident. Leaders formed an intricate party machine within the organization through which they were elected. The Civil Service in return became the payroll with which the leader rewarded his workmen. Offices were appointed among subordinates according to the degree of party service rendered. If the workers were more numerous than the rewards, new positions were created to care for the surplus. These creations only increased the general inefficiency in governmental administration.² Skill, experience, character, and

¹Carl Russell Fish, The Civil Service and the Patronage, New York, 1905, 156.
²Ibid., 156-157, 173-181.
education were seldom looked upon as qualifications for office holding. Politics became a business, the better the organization the greater the possibility of winning the elections.

Closely associated with this party machine were certain current political doctrines such as rotation in office, short terms, equality, anti-bureaucracy, and the ability of every man to hold a governmental position.

From 1845 to 1865 the spoils system was triumphant. The victors, unashamed, divided the spoils and rotation in office became more and more frequent. Every administration shared the guilt almost equally. Conscientious efforts in Congress and in the press to obtain efficiency in government administration by checking the payment of party debts with public offices were usually regarded as partisan attempts to embarrass the administration.

When the Civil War came, the rate of rotation was accelerated.³ Patronage became a powerful tool and it was skillfully used by President Lincoln. But at the same time Congressional interference in the selection of office holders undoubtedly prolonged the duration of the war.⁴ Late in 1864 a demand gained ground that Lincoln should entirely re-allot the offices after March 4, 1865.⁵ Lincoln refused to heed the demand and announced that the personnel of the administration would remain the same. This action seems to

³Fish, The Civil Service and the Patronage, 170.
⁴Adelbert B. Sageser, "First Two Decades of the Pendleton Act," University Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1934, XXXIV, 10.
⁵Fish, The Civil Service and the Patronage, 172.
have checked the popularity of rotation. From that time on it gradually declined.6

The election of 1864 kept the Republicans in power. Once the war was ended it was only natural that the Congressional leaders should lay claim to the control of the patronage. Urged on by the fear of the loss of party dominance, the more radical members devised measures to wrest the control of the patronage from the Executive at the risk of testing the Constitution to its limits.7

A new type of Congressmen replaced the pre-war leaders. Congress was now composed of men of affairs, men who could organize enterprises, secure control of natural resources and franchises, and collect and apply capital on a large scale. Nevertheless this new group closely adhered to the political philosophy of pre-war days; the philosophy of the spoils system.

Those interested in securing better government approached the problem from different directions. Some sought ballot reforms. Others turned to Woman's Suffrage, and another group attacked the spoils system. "One of the first dents in accepted political use and wont was made by the 'Civil Service reformers, inspired by middle class notions,..."8

The 1830's and 1840's witnessed sporadic attempts at administrative reorganization in order to secure efficiency and economy, but the first concrete advances came after 1850.

6Ibid.

7Ibid., 186-188

On March 7, 1851, the Senate passed a resolution requesting the Cabinet members to suggest plans for the establishment of entrance and promotion examinations, for the classification of government clerks according to the types of service rendered, and for the equalization of the salaries in each class. Examinations had been used during this time in the Treasury Department with some success. On May 3, 1852, the Cabinet reported to the Senate; all except Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, approved the reform. In addition to favoring a scheme of classification, the report recommended the adoption of pass examinations for admission into the lowest grades of clerkships and that all vacancies above this group, except chiefs of divisions, be filled by promotion. 9

Congress responded to the recommendations by passing a classification act, March 3, 1853. Governmental clerks were classified in four divisions with a fixed yearly salary for each division. No appointments were to be made to these classes until a candidate had been examined by a qualified board of three examiners, consisting of the chief of the bureau in which entrance was sought and two other clerks selected by the head of the department. Below the four divisions mentioned above there were five additional classes, but the examination principle was not applied to them. Judging from available evidence, the pass-examinations brought meager results. Since competitive examinations were not required, the number of candidates could easily be restricted and the character of the examination depended entirely on the

discretion of the head of the department who also was the appointing officer. Usually oral "farcce" were scheduled in order to give the appointment the appearance of being made in harmony with the law.

The classification of the service was a much needed step. Its effectiveness is shown by the fact that it served with few modifications until 1923.

In 1864 Senator Charles Sumner opened the twenty year campaign for competitive examinations by the introduction of a bill designed to secure greater efficiency in the Civil Service. This bill, reflecting the authors knowledge of Civil Service conditions in England was a radical departure from all previous attempts at reform, since its ultimate aim was to destroy the power of the patronage. This was to be accomplished by the creation of an examining board which would conduct open competitive examinations for all candidates for appointment, except those requiring Senatorial confirmation. Promotions were to be regulated on the basis of merit and seniority, and removals were to be made for good cause only. The measure received some favorable comments by the press but was defeated by a large vote in the Senate. In spite of its failure, the bill started the movement in the right direction; aided by Lincoln's check to rotation and the conscientious efforts of Thomas Allen Jenokes, it foretold "a new and better era."

Thomas Allen Jenokes, a Republican Representative from Rhode Island, was the first man to approach the question of administrative reform scientifically.

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10 Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, 183.

He served as a Congressman from 1863 to 1871. Although his bills were not passed by Congress, he laid down a well planned pattern from which later reforms drew heavily in shaping the law in 1883.\(^{12}\)

One observation seems to have been uppermost in his mind: Our military and naval organizations were selective and permanent; we had established schools of training for these two branches of government service, since efficient results and a sense of responsibility had been obtained in these two fields why could not the same results be achieved in our civil administration which was now inefficient and expensive.\(^{13}\) After studying the situation at home he began a systematic search into the Administration of the Civil Service in Europe and Asia. He was most impressed by the English system.

Jenckes' method of correction was the selection of better qualified government employees by an independent agency. If competitive examinations and fitness were substituted for patronage and the spoils system, the Executive, with a well qualified group of workers, could devote his time and energy to the development of business principles in the Civil administration.

Jenckes introduced bills for the improvement of civil service in 1869, 1870 and 1871. None of these bills passed. However, Jenckes' work forced a discussion in Congress. Moreover, it engaged the attention of the press to considerable extent. Consequently, public interest was being stimulated.


\(^{13}\)Ibid.
His ideas were novel, and such a sweeping change could not be expected, especially in a period still under the shadow of the struggle centering around President Johnson and the Tenure of Office Act.

On March 3, 1871, Senator Trumbull, as a last resort for securing a reform measure, attached a rider to the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill, which was passed as a part of the regular bill after considerable opposition.

The amendment left everything in the hands of the President. He was authorized to prescribe such rules and regulations for the admission of persons into the civil service as would best promote efficiency and to employ suitable persons to assist him in conducting inquiries, in devising rules and regulations, and in ascertaining the fitness of each candidate for government service with respect to age, health, character and ability. An appropriation of twenty-five thousand dollars was provided to carry out the provisions of the bill.

In 1873 Congress failed to make appropriations for the Commission. Grant continued his efforts to obtain funds but without success. In March 1875 the President formally abandoned the system and gave orders for the abolition of the examining boards throughout the country.

However, in 1876, a law was passed prohibiting all executive officers or employees of the United States, except those appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from assessing the salaries of Government employees for political purposes.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14}Charles R. Williams, \textit{The Life of Rutherford B. Hayes}, Columbus, 1922, II, 73.
Rutherford Hayes took seriously the fact that he had been elected on a platform committed to civil service reform. Throughout his term he tried earnestly to live up to the maxims laid down in his inaugural address that "he serves his party best who serves his country best."

In June 1877, Hayes issued an executive order in which he laid down the rule that no officer should be required or permitted to take part in the management of political organizations, caucuses, conventions or election campaigns. The law of 1876 against political assemblies was to be enforced.

Carl Schurz was appointed Secretary of the Interior in Hayes cabinet which was proof of Hayes' sympathy with the reformers. Schurz placed the Interior Department under a set of rules based on those used from 1872 to 1875 and adopted the promotion and entrance examinations which had been assembled at that time by the examining board of the department. The successful application of the merit system to the Interior Department did much to bring about the legislation of 1883.15

In 1877 Dorman B. Eaton, with Hayes' approval, visited England to study the system of examinations and appointments in use in the British Civil Service. He made an intensive investigation of conditions in England and India but, like most reform doctrines, the conclusions seem to have been formulated before the study was made.

Hayes' devotion to the cause and his resistance to the leading spoilsman won popular favor for reform and helped to bolster its acceptance. Congress—

15Sageser, "First Two Decades of the Pendleton Act." U.H.S., XXXIV, 32.
men and Senators still controlled the patronage. Employees were appointed for party reasons. Officers took active part in the elections. Political assessments continued. Nevertheless, the success in the Department of the Interior, in the Postal and Customs Service, and the increased interest of the public was enough that the administration could congratulate itself on the progress made.16

On December 30, 1880 the New York Civil Service Reform Association endorsed a bill to regulate and improve Civil Service drawn up by Dorman B. Eaton, George Curtis, Silas Burt, Orlando B. Potter, Everett Wheeler, Carl Schurz and Wayne Mac Veagh. This bill was introduced into the Senate on January 10, 1881, by George Pendleton of Ohio.

Another factor which turned the public against the established order was the exposure of several political scandals which had taken place since 1860. The disclosure of the corrupt acts of certain high officials shocked the country.

Hopes ran high among certain reformers when James Garfield who had supported their measures since the time of Jenckes, was elected president. The appointment of Cabinet members favorable to the reform strengthened this feeling. But others were not so optimistic. His letter of acceptance had been none too pleasing to them. In his inaugural address Garfield did not advocate the competitive idea, as the reformers had expected but promised to request legislation from Congress regulating tenure and prescribing grounds for

16Williams, Life of Rutherford B. Hayes, 80.
removal in the minor offices of the Civil Service.

Then Garfield was assassinated and the news spread throughout the country that the President had been slain by a disappointed office seeker. This crime was widely publicized by the reformers to win followers to their side.

In 1879, George H. Pendleton, Democratic Senator from Ohio, directed his attention to the problem of reform. Pendleton was an experienced lawyer and a well known politician. He had served as a State Senator and as a Representative in Congress. In 1864, he was a candidate for Vice-President, and, four years later in advocating the "Ohio Idea," he won nation-wide recognition as a Presidential candidate.

Pendleton introduced his bill to improve the Civil Service along with a second one to prohibit political assessments on December 15, 1880. The former, based fundamentally on the Jenckes' bills, not only contained several provisions which were impracticable, but also some features which were undoubtedly unconstitutional.

Dorman Eaton was sent to confer with Senator Pendleton in hopes that the latter could be persuaded to substitute the New York plan for his own. He pointed out the features of Pendleton's bill which verged on unconstitutionality and several of its impractical provisions. Pendleton was convinced and on January 10, 1881, Pendleton by unanimous consent of the Senate substituted New York measure for his own.

This bill provided for a Commission of five members chosen by the President without the advice and the consent of the Senate. Three members were to hold no other office and would receive a salary of $3500 per annum.
The other two were to be experienced officers in the service of the United States who would receive $500 a year, in addition to their regular salary. Not over three members of the Commission could belong to the same party. They could be removed for cause only, not for political reasons, and were to be allowed to file written answers to the charges against them. The Commission was to assist the President in making rules, supervise examinations, conduct investigations and to submit an annual report to the President. A chief-examiner and a secretary were to assist the Commission. Besides these, the Commission was to choose persons in the official service to act as examiners, who would receive $500 per year in addition to their regular salary. The administrative clauses provided for open competitive examinations whenever practical, classification of the offices, original entrance at the lowest grade, promotion on the basis of merit and competition, noncompetitive examinations where competitive ones were impractical, written notices from the departments regarding appointments and removals to be filed with the Commission, and immunity from compulsory political contributions. Violations were to be punished by fine or imprisonment. The act was to apply to the departments in Washington and to the custom houses and post offices employing fifty or more persons.

The Senate took no further action during the session, and likewise the House failed to act on a similar bill introduced by Representative Willis on January 17, 1881.

Much apprehension awaited Arthur's first annual message to Congress. A leader of the New York Stalwarts he was considered a spoilsman. The reform-
ers, however, were willing to concede that his record as collector of the New York port was superior to that of his predecessors, especially when tested in the light of patronage disposals.17

Pendleton reintroduced his bill on December 6, 1881, to insure early consideration of it, should Congress see fit to legislate on civil service. The bill was reported favorably, by the Committee, but the Senate ended without further action. Likewise, in the House no vote was taken on the reform bill reintroduced by Representative Willis.

All during the summer and fall of 1882 Congressmen were flooded with petitions. These came from every section of the country with New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut contributing the largest number. The press was thrown open to thorough discussion.

The voluminous agitation carried on during the summer by the reformers, the severe Republican losses in the fall election, and the general objections raised over political assessments seemed to have convinced Congress that public opinion was favoring reform.18 Both parties showed a change in policy. President Arthur in his annual message favored passage of the bill. On December 27, 1882 the Senate passed the Pendleton Bill, thirty-eight to five with thirty-three absent. On January fourth the House passed it 155 to 47, 87 not voting. Arthur signed the bill on January 16, 1883.


CHAPTER TWO

FROM ALBANY TO SAN JUAN

Theodore Roosevelt entered the New York Legislature at the age of 23. His chief interest was reform and early in the session of 1882 he demanded the impeachment of Judge Westbrook of Newbury on the grounds of collusion with Jay Gould to serve the interests of stock speculators. His demand failed but the people of his district ran him 2,000 votes ahead of his ticket in the year Cleveland swept the state by 192,000. The Republican minority nominated him for the speaker of the house.

At the end of the session the Harper’s Weekly of April 21, 1883, said of him, “With energy and ardour and with a directness and plainness of speech from which older legislators shrink, Mr. Roosevelt, in the last session, moved the Westbrook inquiry and in the present session he has urged proceedings to vacate the charter of the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company. He has also introduced the municipal civil service reform bill, and his voice and vote are sure for whatever is honest, wise and progressive.”

On the bill to appoint Civil Service Commissioners for the whole state, Roosevelt ultimately gave his full support. At first he incurred much criticism for pressing a measure of his own that applied only to New York City. The Civil Service enthusiasm which later brought considerable fame to
Roosevelt was lukewarm in 1883.¹

In 1884, Titus Sheard, the Republican Speaker, made Roosevelt chairman of the committee on Cities, giving him full authority to work for their betterment. He supported a number of measures to make state law imperative in the cities also.

One of Roosevelt's bills deprived the Board of Aldermen of New York of the power to confirm appointments, thus dealing a deadly blow to John Kelly's control over the mayor by means of corrupt deals.² Another bill made the City Comptroller and the president of Board of Alderman elective officers. Another bill substituted salaries for fees in county offices, thereby saving $200,000 annually. Still another made the mayor the actual head of the City Government, giving him power to appoint heads of departments, commissioners, marshalls, and police justices and to remove them for cause, after a hearing and with the approval of the Governor. Governor Cleveland gave full approval to each of these bills.

To conclude his work, Roosevelt introduced a measure known as the Tenure-of-office Bill, which authorized the next Mayor to appoint the Register and the Commissioner of Public Works. This measure was aimed at Hubert O. Thompson, whose administration of the Public Works Department had long been characterized by extravagance and graft.³ Two legislative committees had

¹Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, New York, 1931, 75.
³Ibid., 18.
condemned his methods and a grand jury had indicted him for corruption. The press of the city, regardless of party, had stigmatised him.

The bill met much opposition in the Legislature, but Roosevelt secured its passage six days before the Legislature adjourned.

Thompson was an able politician who had defied Kelly, led in the organization of County Democracy, and at the convention of 1882 had boldly supported Cleveland. To deprive such an able lieutenant of his office on the eve of a presidential election was unthinkable, and Cleveland vetoed the bill.\(^4\)

It is interesting to note the attitude of Roosevelt the reformer toward labor at this time. Roosevelt's real feelings toward labor became obvious when he spoke on a bill to forbid street-car employees from working more than twelve hours a day. This, he said, was "purely socialistic." He opposed the measure on principle. It demonstrated the spread of Communist ideas. "The law of supply and demand," he explained, "could no more be repealed than could the law of gravitation." It was un-American for the street car conductors and motormen to demand such protection. "No men who asked to be coddled by law were worthy of their sex."\(^5\) In all this Roosevelt merely echoed the best sentiment of his day. The previous year, when sociologists called for abolition of contract labor and conditions of virtual slavery in State prisons, he had disclaimed "maudlin sympathy for convicts...for men who had deliberately

\(^4\)Ibid., 19.

\(^5\)Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 78.
placed themselves outside the pale of society." He voted no. So, also he had opposed increasing the pay of New York City firemen to $1,200 a year, as well as pensions for teachers in the city schools.

At the Republican convention of 1884, Blaine was nominated for the presidency. Roosevelt regarded Blaine as a "bad man." He preferred Senator Edmunds, whom he had never met until the convention. During the convention Roosevelt and Lodge campaigned actively for Edmunds. When Blaine was nominated Roosevelt decided, although against his inclination and, as he believe, "against his interest," to support him because he thought the future of the country safer under the control of the Republican Party. Curtis, Schurz and other Civil Service reformers backed Cleveland.

After Blaine's defeat Roosevelt was inactive until the New York race for Mayor in 1886. The Democrats had nominated Abram S. Hewitt for the office. Hewitt had spent ten years in Congress and had earned an excellent reputation. Among other pledges he promised to obey the spirit of legislation affecting Civil Service.

Many working men, most of them Knights of Labor, organized and asked Henry George to run for Mayor. George, the author of the "Single-Tax" plan, was an irresponsible social reformer. There was a strong sentiment against the Republicans nominating a candidate to oppose Hewitt. The Democrats controlled New York City while the Republicans were very weak. It was felt that a Republican candidate would garner Hewitt's votes from the Republicans and

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6Ibid.
7Alexander, Four Famous New Yorkers, 27.
swing the election to George. Hewitt was one of the best men chosen to run for mayor and had Republican support. To the surprise of everyone Boss Platt and a "Committee of One-Hundred" nominated Roosevelt to oppose Hewitt and George.

There was much opposition to Roosevelt's nomination as it was felt that one good man was opposing another. Furthermore, many people questioned Roosevelt's acceptance of support from the very men his reform measures had aimed at. However, Roosevelt enjoyed the idea of a rough and tumble political campaign. In addition, a few Republican experts felt that George would split the Democratic vote and a Republican could be elected mayor of New York.

In the campaign Roosevelt expressed sympathy for the factory child; for the women, half clas and half fed; for the inmates of overcrowded tenements turned into tobacco factories and poisoned by foul air; and for the honest toiler whose pitiful wage failed to support his dependents.

The city was aroused as never before. The total vote of 218,873 exceeded the gubernatorial vote of the preceding year by 19,753 votes. Of the voted cast, Hewitt had 90,466; George, 67,930; and Roosevelt, 60,477. Roosevelt thereafter made slight reference to his nomination for mayor.

In the election of 1888 Roosevelt campaigned for Harrison. When Harrison won the election Roosevelt, the opponent of the Spoils System was on hand to see about his reward. Roosevelt disliked and worked against Blaine, but in 1889 Blaine had Harrison's ear, so Roosevelt permitted him to urge upon the President his desire for a Federal appointment. Roosevelt would even serve as Assistant Secretary of State under a man whose integrity he question-
Lodge pressed Roosevelt's eligibility and the work he did in November's election. Speaker Reed also brought pressure. Harrison did not wish to give Roosevelt such a high post and yet he felt the need of rewarding him. By a master stroke Harrison won credit for the administration and satisfied Roosevelt's friends by tendering an appointment as Commissioner of U.S. Civil Service to a man with a reputation for civil service reform. Roosevelt eagerly accepted the post which paid $3,500 a year. At this time there were 28,000 employees on the Civil Service rolls. Roosevelt accepted this unimportant assignment because of economic reasons. The Roosevelts operated on a close budget from 1889 until 1895 because of economic difficulties.

As Civil Service commissioner Roosevelt made it his business to see that no such rewards as he had received were made through the agency of the commission.

Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1895, "Remember that once a man takes an interest in politics upon the ground that he is to have an office, after a while, inevitably, that man grows to think that the office is the only reason why he should take an interest at all, and he doesn't exactly understand any other point of view."

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8 Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 120.
9 Ibid., 127.
Cleveland, In January, 1889, had issued an executive order bringing the railway mail service under the law. This order was to take effect on March 15th, just after Harrison's term began but on March 11th, Mr. Lyman, the only Civil Service Commissioner, reported that a list of eligibles could not be ready before May 1st, and asked for a postponement. This was granted and during the intervening six weeks the service was looted, Democrats being turned out and Republicans appointed.

Before Roosevelt's appointment the various commissions had been composed of men of quiet disposition and mature years, whose natural inclination was to follow the lines of least resistance in all matters of policy.11

The manner in which the law was enforced during the first six years justified this view. In many instances its administration was a sham, and in all instances no effort was made to detect, expose, and punish violations either its letter or spirit.

However, Roosevelt upon assuming the position of Commissioner put new life into the Civil Service. Before long Roosevelt was fighting with Postmaster General Wanamaker. Wanamaker said Roosevelt's handling of the Baltimore Post Office investigation was in error. The Committee on Civil Service of the House of Representatives reported that Wanamaker's criticism of the commission was not borne out by the evidence; and that his actions indicated either a determination not to enforce the law or negligence to the last degree.

The Republican Spoilsman descended on Harrison demanding Roosevelt's removal because by attacking Wanamaker he had addacked the Administration. On the other hand, testimony taken in this case would virtually have required the dismissal of Wanamaker by any President who desired to enforce the law. He took neither action. Both men remained in office.

A few years later Roosevelt wrote "...the factions of a party will fight just as savagely among one another with as merciless a ferocity, as they will against their party opponents." By and large, Roosevelt did a good job, as did his fellow commissioners, in behalf of Civil Service. Roosevelt insisted that questions in Civil Service examinations should be practical. Tests should be concerned with the kind of things a man would do in service, riding, shooting, carpenter work, or whatever. This was always a forte with Roosevelt.

Once, when Congress would not appropriate enough money for examinations, Roosevelt stopped examinations in the districts of Congressmen who refused to vote the money required. There were howls from the constituents to their Congressmen. Some Congressmen talked of impeaching Roosevelt. In time, he got the necessary funds.

During Harrison's term of office the Indian Service, The Fish Commission and the Weather Bureau were brought into the classified service. The Civil


13 *Roosevelt, Merit System*, 5.

14 *Faulke, Roosevelt*, 29.
Service Commission brought opportunities for employment in the classified service to the South. The Southerners felt that with a Republican Administration they had no chance. By speeches and advertising the Commission got the Southerners to take examinations. Almost half of those who passed were from the South.

Roosevelt was indifferent in the election of 1892. Foulke said Roosevelt was indifferent because he felt Harrison had not lived up to all his Civil Service promises. This may be true but it is well to bear in mind that Roosevelt had worked with Cleveland when he was the Democratic governor of New York and Roosevelt's relations with Harrison were not the best. In any event, when Cleveland was elected he retained Roosevelt as Civil Service Commissioner.

In January, 1893, Harrison ordered classification of all employees of free-delivery post offices not hitherto classified. Although criticized as post election classification, it added 7,500 positions to the Civil Service.

Post-election classification was not new and it had been tried by Cleveland as previously mentioned. However, Cleveland did not try to disrupt the classifications of Harrison when he was returned to office. Responsible politicians were tiring of the trouble and confusion of the turnover caused by the spoils system.

One example of the confusion of turnover occurred at the Terra Haute Post Office. The Republican Postmaster Greiner was to leave office on Satur-

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15 Ibid., 31.
day, May 12. The postal workers were to be classified then. However, Donham the Democratic appointee seized the post-office on Friday May 11. He fired all of the old employees for insubordination. Greiner contacted the Postmaster General in Washington who told him to stay in office until closing time Saturday. Donham, however, held the postoffice.

Roosevelt arrived on the 25th to investigate the matter. On the recommendation of the Commission the employees of the new postmaster were removed and the old ones were reinstated by the Post Office Department. The deciding factor was the matter of insubordination. The employees were discharged on Friday night for insubordination which according to Donham occurred Saturday morning.16

Cleveland worked with the Civil Service Commission during his second term. Roosevelt continued to tour the country and occasionally engaged in verbal fisticuffs with members of Congress.

In 1894 the Civil Service Commission was hindered in its efforts to stop the levying of political assessments on classified employees. The Attorney-General ruled that while soliciting in a public building was a violation of the Civil Service Act, soliciting by letters mailed to employees in their offices was not a violation since he claimed the mailing did not take place within a public building.17

Roosevelt commented at this time, "Civil Service employees of higher

16Ibid., 35

grades are probably too well informed of their rights to submit to extortion veiled in this or any other guise, but there are doubtless considerable numbers of the less intelligent and poorly paid civil servants, at least in some of our state and local governments, who are really being assessed frequently and heavily under the pretense, of course, of 'voluntary' contributions. 18

At this time Roosevelt was beginning to tire of his job as Commissioner. The following May he resigned to become Police Commissioner of New York City. In view of what is to come it is important to quote from some of Roosevelt's writings at this time.

In referring to past presidents and their attitudes on Civil Service, Roosevelt wrote in August, 1895:

"Presidents Arthur, Harrison, and Cleveland have all desired to see the service extended, and to see the law well administered... Each has been a sincere party man, who felt strongly on such questions as those of tariff, of finance, and of our foreign policy, and each has been obliged to conform more or less closely to the wishes of his party associates and fellow party leaders; and, of course, these party leaders...wished the offices to be distributed as they had been since Jackson's time. 19

Roosevelt wrote of his achievements as Civil Service Commissioner:

"...reflect on what has actually been gained in the past six years. By

19 Theodore Roosevelt, American Ideals, New York, 1897, 133
the inclusion of the railway mail service, the smaller free-delivery offices, the Indian School service, the Internal Revenue Service, and other less important branches, the extent of the public service which is under the protection of the law has been more than doubled and there are now nearly 50,000 employees of the Federal Government who have been withdrawn from... the spoils system." 20

On the matter of political dismissals, Roosevelt wrote,

"In the aggregate it is doubtful if one per cent of all the employees have been dismissed for political reasons. In other words, where under the spoils system a hundred men would have been turned out under the Civil Service Law as administered under our supervision, ninety-nine men were kept in." 21

The New York City Police Department was much in need of improvement in 1895. Jobs and promotions were for sale. Many policemen were in the employ of lawless elements. Morale among the honest members of the force was low. Roosevelt did much to correct the situation.

In making dismissals, a man's efficiency and past record were considered. No outside pressure was to be tolerated. In making promotions, the officers efficiency and past record would be reviewed; but also his personal prowess was considered. In making appointments, a system of rigid competitive examinations was used. This combined a mental examination and a severe physical examination. There was also a thorough investigation of a man's

20 Ibid., 152.
21 Ibid., 132.
character.

Roosevelt had to work for a better police force in the face of obstacles placed in his path by the mayor and local politicians. The reformers with impractical ideas were also a problem. As Roosevelt wrote to his sister, Mrs. Cowles:

"All day I strive to push matters along; to keep on good terms with the Mayor, while rejecting his advice and refusing to obey his orders, not to be drawn into a personal quarrel with Platt; not to let my colleagues split either among themselves or with me; to work with reformers, and yet not let them run away with the department... I have to contend with the hostility of the political machines; I have to contend with the folly of the reformers, and the indifference of decent citizens. The work itself is hard, worrying and often disagreeable... But the battle for decent government must be won by just such interminable, grimy drudgery."

Roosevelt was in the habit of roaming New York by night, checking on policemen, inspecting taverns and making sure that all was well. On these nightly sojourns Roosevelt was usually alone except for a reporter or two. For Roosevelt was looking to the future as his letter to his brother-in-law Admiral William Cowles indicates:

"Altho I feel very strongly indeed on such questions as municipal and civil service reform, I feel even more strongly on the question of our

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22 Alexander, Four Famous New Yorkers, 244.
attitude towards the outside world with all that it implies, from seacoast
defense and a first class navy to a properly vigorous foreign policy. 23

In a few months there would be a presidential election and Roosevelt was
prepared. McKinley defeated Bryan and Roosevelt was at the trough. This
time Roosevelt desired the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Roosevelt's name was presented by Senator Lodge and others. Platt was
asked to approve the selection. Platt remembered the trouble Roosevelt had
caused him as Civil Service Commission and Police Commissioner. After
listening to "Jack" Astor's plea, Platt reasoned that Roosevelt was not
essentially harmful, and could probably do less harm to the organization as
Assistant Secretary of the Navy than in any other office that could be
named. 24

However, Platt was opposed for the Senate by Joseph Choate, a friend
and supporter of Roosevelt since the beginning of his career. Choate, close
friend of Roosevelt, was running against a man of whom Roosevelt had said
only a few months before, that he manifested an "absolutely cynical disre-
gard of decency." 25

In order to get Platt's approval for the post of Assistant Secretary of
Navy, Roosevelt was asked to support Platt against his friend. Roosevelt

23 Richard Hofstadter, American Political Traditions, New York, 1948,
213.

24 Harold F. Gosnell, Boss Platt and His New York Machine, Chicago,
1924, 254.

readily agreed and in April, 1897 Roosevelt was appointed. 26

Earlier, Roosevelt wrote Lodge to tell John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, "I want him to understand that... I shall stay at Washington, hot weather or any other weather, whenever he wants me to stay there, and go wherever he sends me, and my aim should be solely to make his administration a success." 27

Five years before Roosevelt had said, "We want to take out of politics that great bribery chest, out of which are paid those men whose activity is most noxious to the interest of the public at large. The presence of patronage is a handicap that is difficult to overestimate upon those who strive to get good government." 28

How sincere, it may be asked, was Roosevelt, when he said, "The true aristocratic system is the system by which you intrust the care and conduct of your politics to an oligarchy, a caste of place-hunters and place-seekers, a caste composed not of the best, but of the worst elements of the community. That is the true oligarchy, that is un-American, and that is the system of the spoilsmen. The merit system, the system that we strive to introduce by reforming the civil-service is emphatically American and emphatically democratic. It is the system of fair play to all and no favors. It is the system which says that every man shall stand on his own feet, shall make his own way,

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 168
28 Theodore Roosevelt, Address of the Honorable Theodore Roosevelt Before the Civil Service Reform Association of Missouri, St. Louis, 1891, II.
and shall not be hampered and shall not be helped by an favoritism whether political or personal."29

Thus did Roosevelt become Assistant Secretary of the Navy. McKinley worried about this appointment because Roosevelt was a war-monger.30 Roosevelt did a good job in helping to get the navy ready for the war with Spain. When war did come Roosevelt was ready to dash off to San Juan Hill. To the Police Commissioner who carried a reporter with him on his nightly tour the post as an Assistant Secretary of Navy lacked the publicity which he regarded as of so much importance.

We need not dwell on Roosevelt's "heroics" on San Juan Hill. We will see however, that it was the dividing line in Roosevelt's career. From now on Roosevelt was to increase in importance.

29Ibid., 15
30Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 165
CHAPTER THREE
FROM SAN JUAN TO WASHINGTON

Roosevelt received his fair share of publicity during the war. In New York he was considered a hero. He was the fearless Polic Commissioner, able Civil Service Commissioner, the man who got the navy ready for war, and the hero of San Juan Hill. Surely a place could be found for such a distinguished citizen.

Boss Platt was worried about electing a Republican Governor of New York. Platt expressed his views as follows: "I thought at the best we would have a hard time to elect a Republican governor in 1896. Already the canal appropriations were giving us trouble, the frictions between Governor Black and some of the state leaders were a source of anxiety."¹

The situation was still further complicated by what Platt called the "ultrapartisan acts of the Black Administration."²

"Starchless civil service, which put practically every Democratic office holder out and installed a Republican organization man in his job; the appointment of Louis F. Payn as superintendent of insurance, and the other ultrapartisan acts of the Black Administration, while they popularized it with the

²Ibid.
organization workers, aroused rebellion among the Independents; Black, offering no apologies for running a simon-pure party regime, planned a renomination and secretly nursed a hope that he would land the Presidency.  

Platt sent Quigg to talk to Roosevelt when his boat docked. Quigg and Roosevelt talked at length and Roosevelt agreed to run for Governor. Governor Black was dropped after a short struggle and Roosevelt became the Republican standard bearer.

The popular hero, still in uniform, toured the state. Roosevelt loved the crowds and the limelight. The "Rough Rider" theme was used at practically every meeting. In the end Roosevelt was elected.

In his first message as Governor, Roosevelt demanded the restoration of "starch" to the civil service law, declaring the Black statute "a farce" since half a mark for merit and the other half for fitness did not constitute a competitive examination. Moreover, to avoid "the utter confusion" existing in having one method of appointment for Greater New York, one for other cities, and one for the State-at-large, he recommended one uniform system for the entire State.

It is interesting to examine some of the actions of the reform governor. In the building of a state canal, Aldridge, one of the leaders of the Republican party, was accused of misconduct. An investigating commission appointed by Governor Black in 1898 reported.

3 Ibid.
4 Alexander, Four Famous New Yorkers, 325.
On January 1, 1898, because of a change in the administration of the city government of Rochester, many employees lost their places. Of these, ten or fifteen were appointed inspectors of the canal work without civil service examination. The evidence shows that it must have been known at the time of their appointment that some of these temporary appointees were not competent to properly discharge the duties of inspectors, and it follows that the money paid for their services was not properly extended.5

It was also shown by this same commission that great gangs of inspectors were employed in the season of open navigation when there was comparatively little use for them. Yet Roosevelt thought the evidence against Aldridge insufficient to warrant a prosecution.6

In 1895 there were 5,400 persons, not counting laborers, in the employ of the state. Of these, one-third were in the class chosen by competitive examination, six per cent were unclassified or exempt from examination and the remainder were in the non-competitive or "pass examination" class. The roster of state employees in 1900, the last year of Roosevelt's administration, included 6,000 persons, of whom slightly more than one-third were in the competitive class, 16% not subject to any examination, and the remainder in the non-competitive class. In other words, in the former year, 340, and in the latter year 1,300 of the choicest positions in the state service were not subject to the merit system at all, while the great bulk of the persons seek-

5Cosnall, Boss Platt, 239
6Ibid.
Roosevelt during his administration had worked closely with Platt. However, near the end of his first term he began to act independently of Platt. This independence was to lead Roosevelt indirectly to the presidency. Before going further, it would be well to consider an earlier writing of Roosevelt which expresses a Spencerian sentiment. In November, 1886, he wrote, "Moreover, working men, whose lives are passed in one unceasing round of narrow and monotonous toil are not unnaturally inclined to pay heed to the demagogues and professional labor advocates who promise if elected to try to pass laws to better their condition; they are hardly prepared to understand or approve the American doctrine of government, which is that the state cannot ordinarily attempt to better the condition of a man or a set of men, but can merely see that no wrong is done him or them by anyone else, and that all alike have a fair chance in the struggle for life - a struggle wherein, it may as well at once be freely though sadly acknowledged, very many many are bound to fail, no matter how ideally perfect any given system of government may be."  

Roosevelt regarded all union movements as labor movements. He thought it would lead to another French Revolution in America. Roosevelt had once refused to meet Governor Altgeld of Illinois, because Altgeld showed a pro-labor attitude in the Pullman strike. Roosevelt felt so strongly that unions would

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7Ibid., 237.

8Roosevelt, American Ideals, 103.
lead to revolution that he worried lest he might one day face Governor Altgeld on the battle field. 9

Roosevelt viewed the spoils system with an air of amused tolerance, especially as it concerned appointments. As Civil Service Commissioner, Roosevelt fought the spoilsmen hard, but as Governor of New York and later as President he did not try strenuously to wreck the organization by drying up the sources of its power as he might have done. Roosevelt concerned himself with large matters which attracted public attention, while Platt was concerned with the minute details of the system of party rewards and punishments. 10

What did Roosevelt think of the Vice-presidency, a post he was soon to fill? In 1896 he wrote:

"The Vice-President should, as far as possible, represent the same views and principles which have secured the nomination and election of the President, and he should be a man standing well in the councils of the party, trusted by his fellow party leaders, and able in the event of any accident to his chief to take up the work of the latter just where it was left." 11

When questioned regarding his conduct in giving in to Platt and other spoilsmen, Roosevelt remarked, "Without compromise, nothing was accomplished. Opportunism could be one of the major virtues. Sometimes it is a sign of the

9Richard Hofstadter, American Political Traditions, New York, 1948, 216.

10Gosnell, Boss Platt, 219.

11Roosevelt, American Ideals, 187.
highest statesmanship to temporize."\(^\text{12}\)

What did Roosevelt think of his accomplishments as governor? "I think I have been the best Governor within my time, better than either Cleveland or Tilden."\(^\text{13}\)

Roosevelt was not a dependable "regular." Rather, he was given to impetuous statements on every kind of question. Platt wanted to be rid of Roosevelt because he would have no more trouble about campaign contributions in 1900, and no more criticism from past contributors, no more worries about "reform appointments" and legislation, no more breakfast meetings with Roosevelt in which he "had to endure that bull-dog grin."\(^\text{14}\)

McKinley and Hanna did not want Roosevelt. Roosevelt, seeing the attempt to get rid of him in New York, did not want the job. The resourceful Platt, however, was able to push Roosevelt into the vice-presidency. As 1900 came to a close Platt was very happy. He was rid of Roosevelt and his own man was governor of New York. Platt did not realize that in a few months Roosevelt would be President and the governor would unite with Roosevelt against Platt.

On September 14, 1901, McKinley died from his assassin's wounds and Roosevelt became President. Roosevelt, the Civil Service Commissioner, Police Commission, State Legislator, Assistant Secretary of Navy, Rough Rider, Governor and political opportunist was now president. What would he do?

\(^{12}\)Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 215.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., 214.

\(^{14}\)Gosnell, Boss Platt, 123.
Conservative Republicans were worried. Civil Service Reformers were jubilant. The 'Big Stick' was going to the White House.
When Theodore Roosevelt took office in 1901, the country was well over a severe depression and in the midst of a period of healthy economic development. Its farmers were more prosperous than they had been for about forty years, its working class was employed and gaining in living standards, and even its middle class was far busier counting the moral costs of success than it was worrying about any urgent problems of family finance.¹

Roosevelt accepted McKinley's cabinet. McKinley had the art of picking capable men. Later Roosevelt appointed Henry C. Payne as Postmaster General. Payne had been a political manager in Wisconsin and the selection of such a man for a position that controlled more appointments than any other awakened much criticism. Roosevelt answered these criticisms:

"When President McKinley died, I accepted his Cabinet in its entirety. There was not a single politician in it. He did not need any. He was such a skillful politician himself that he did not require the advice of any other. But with me it is different. I do not see as clearly as he did how my action will affect public opinion or influence political affairs and I want someone who can advise me and tell me what the effect will be. That is the reason I

¹Richard Hofstadter, Age of Reform, New York, 1955, 302.
have asked Mr. Payne to become Postmaster General.  

On November 18, 1901, Roosevelt ordered the repealing of exemptions from examination of a great number of employees in various departments at large of the Army. A few days later he authorized the classification of all superintendents of Indian schools who were acting as agents. He also made a rule restricting transfers and on the following day the important rural free delivery service was finally classified.

Roosevelt's Executive Order defined political activity and differentiated between classified and unclassified employees. There were stricter rules on the classified employees. The principal restriction on the unclassified employees was the rule that they were not to coerce the classified employees. Roosevelt also undertook a definition of "just cause for removal." This would include not only willful misconduct on the part of an employee but mental or physical disability or the fact that his services were no longer required. Roosevelt revoked McKinley's requirement that an employee be given a written notice of charges for removal and a chance to reply. However, this protection to employees was restored by Taft.

In 1895 the Postmaster General had issued orders that no postal employees should come to Washington for the purpose of testifying before Congress on working conditions. This order was strengthened by Roosevelt's Executive Orders in 1902 and 1906, forbidding employees either as individuals or as

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2 Foulke, Roosevelt and the Spoilemen, 56

3 Civil Service Commission, History of Civil Service, 81
organizations, "...to solicit an increase of pay or to influence or attempt in interest any other legislation whatever, either before Congress or its Committees, or in any way save through the heads of the Departments, in or under which they serve, on penalty of dismissal from the Government service."4

In December, 1902, Roosevelt feared to nominate consuls who stood highest on the list for fear the Senate would refuse confirmation. He afterwards promulgated an order that the higher consulships should be filled by promotion or by mere pass examinations, a halfway measure which led, however, to the better regulation of this service under Taft.5 Again, Roosevelt applied his theory of highest statesmanship and temporized.

During 1903, the Civil Service Rules promulgated by Roosevelt defined the jurisdiction of Civil Service Act as including all positions in the executive branch except laborers and Presidential appointees.6

Roosevelt's opponent for control of New York, Boss Platt, was encountering difficulties. The Governor and the President were working together against him. "Less spectacular...but nevertheless of great importance to him were the extensions of the competitive system, the changes in the Civil Service rules, and the improved efficiency in the execution of Civil Service Law brought about by the new president. These inroads into the federal patronage greatly weakened the Senators position in New York City."7

4Ibid., 82.
5Foulke, Roosevelt and the Spoilsman, 64.
6Civil Service Commission - History, 56.
7Gosnell, Boss Platt, 293
It would be wrong to assume that finally Roosevelt was to champion Civil Service reform. No doubt can exist that as the 1904 convention drew near, Roosevelt was playing politics in his own behalf. Expediency dictated certain of his appointments. One was James S. Clarkson, of Iowa, who had been appointed First Assistant Postmaster General by Harrison and whom Civil Service Commissioner Roosevelt had denounced as a foe of the merit system.

On April 17, 1902, Roosevelt chose him for surveyor of customs in New York. The function of Clarkson was to solidify Roosevelt sentiment among Negro Republicans in the South. "In politics," Roosevelt apologized privately, "we have to do a great many things that we ought not to do."

Publicly Roosevelt stated, "He belonged to the Stalwart group of Republicans and bitterly and conscientiously opposed civil service reform. He was made First Assistant Postmaster General under Harrison. Like his predecessors and successors...he made...occasional removals with political consideration no less than consideration of efficiency of the service... For this he is in no way to be criticized... Mr. Clarkson is an honorable and capable man." The "occasional removals" consisted of displacing 31,000 Democratic postmasters who should have been protected by civil service regulations.

We can learn more of Roosevelt’s aims as president by examining his

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8 Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 343.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 344.
relationships with the Muckrakers. During his administration there were few attacks on the federal government aside from those directed against the Senate. Many of the Muckrakers were ardent Roosevelt supporters. Only once did Roosevelt publicly attack the Muckrakers. It was David Graham Phillips' attack on poor old Chauncey De Pue he said, which aroused him to wrath. 12

When Lincoln Steffens first came to Washington with the intentions of exposing the federal government, Roosevelt was unwilling to tell of his experiences with the Senate and the House machines, with the Federal Courts, and with the forces in the government of the District of Columbia. The reasons for this was that Roosevelt was trying to work and deal with them. "He was not a reformer in the White House; he was a careerist on the people's side." 13

He was trying to get some concessions from the powers that be and make them do some things for the country as a whole. In return for the Congressmen's votes he would appoint their candidates to office. Another reason for Roosevelt's reluctance to collaborate with the Muckrakers was his realisation that he was no hero fighting for democracy. "He had no economics, he never understood the political issue between the common and the special interests; neither as a Police Commissioner nor as a President did he grasp the difference between morality and representation." 14

12 C. G. Regier, Era of the Muckrakers, Chapel Hill, 1932, 2.
13 Ibid., 106.
14 Ibid., 109.
Roosevelt while increasing the numbers of federal employees covered by Civil Service still continued to give jobs to his friends. One of these friends, of whom little has been written, was Joe Murray. Murray was a political aide of Roosevelt's who had been with him since he first began his career in the New York legislature. Murray was "one of the few who could compete with the Rough Riders in obtaining appointment to public office." 15

As Civil Service Commissioner, Roosevelt did much to end the evils of campaign contributions by Civil Service employees and to protect employees who refused to take part in the electioneering. 16 Now as President he advanced a new idea to which we, today, are giving much thought. In his message at the beginning of the first session of the Sixtieth Congress, December, 1907, Roosevelt said:

"The need for collecting large campaign funds would vanish if Congress provided an appropriation for the proper and legitimate expenses of each of the great national parties, an appropriation ample enough to meet the necessity for thorough organization and machinery, which requires a large expenditure of money. Then the stipulation should be made that no party receiving campaign funds from the Treasury should accept more than a fixed amount from any individual subscriber or donor; and the necessary publicity for receipts and expenditures could without difficulty be provided." 17

15 Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 59.
16 Civil Service Commission, History, 56.
Nothing came of it though some states (Nevada, Colorado, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, South Dakota, California and Wisconsin) had laws of this character regarding legitimate expenses.

Roosevelt instituted many changes in Civil Service. He started a position classification system based on duties and responsibilities, with adjustment of compensation to remedy the discrepancies resulting from the fact that the last salary revision was in 1853. In 1905 the Commission had reported many resignations because of the low salary paid government experts compared to the high salaries paid in private industry. In 1906 the Commission had reported that from 40% to 60% of the "top eligibles" on the stenographic and typist list did not accept positions because of the low salaries. Between 1853 and 1903 there had been an actual decrease of $2.70 in the average annual salary. 18

Certain branches of the service, through the efforts of interested legislators and through their union organizations, were able to gain improvements for themselves by piecemeal legislation but nothing was done for the service as a whole.

Roosevelt by the classification system was able to improve the salaries. In 1908 the Postal Service was granted increases in salary. A system of automatic promotions based on classification by duties and an efficiency rating system was adopted. The Immigration and Custom's Service also gained

18Civil Service Commission, History, 79.
special legislation on their behalf. 19

In 1901, Roosevelt appointed the keep Committee which made the first modern survey of positions. Each department was directed by Executive Order to install the Keep Committee system in its own organization. However, the system was not followed and soon fell into disuse.

During his second term local Civil Service boards were consolidated into districts with an experienced man in charge of each. The country was divided into thirteen districts. The following year it was reduced to twelve. Later, thirteen districts were adopted as permanent.

What were the overall accomplishments of Civil Service during Roosevelt's administration? Of the new positions created by the expansion of Federal functions, 93,000 were filled by the merit system through competitive examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission. Six-thousand rural free delivery carriers, fifteen thousand of the fourth-class postmasters, the permanent staff of the Census Bureau, and the field services of the War Department were placed under Civil Service either by Executive order or by legislation.

In all, 35,000 formerly unclassified positions were classified during Roosevelt's administration, and the classified service was increased from 11.5% to 63.9% of the whole body of federal employees. 20

19 Ibid., 80.
20 Ibid., 75.
Before presenting any conclusions it would be well to examine two quotations. The first by Theodore Roosevelt made in 1895.

"The spoils-monger and spoils-seeker invariably breed the bribe-taker and bribe giver, the embezzler of public funds and the corrupter of voters. Civil Service Reform is not merely a movement to better the public service. It achieves this end, too; but its main purpose is to raise the tone of public life, and it is in this direction that its effects have been of incalculable good to the whole community."\(^1\)

Was the tone of public life raised by men like Platt, Aldridge, Payne, Clarkson and Murray? Did giving jobs to former Rough Riders better the public service?

Richard Hofstadter wrote of Roosevelt: "A conservative politician who has sufficient gifts - Theodore Roosevelt is the best example - can in fact enjoy both respectability and the financial support of the great interests and all the satisfaction of the conservative role in public affairs and yet exert his maximal influence by using the rhetoric of progressivism and winning

\(^{1}\text{Roosevelt, } \textit{American Ideals, }130.
the plaudits of the reformer."²

Civil Service reform did not interest Roosevelt when he first began his public career. The reform movement was gaining in momentum, slowly but surely, and Roosevelt adopted it. He was given the job of Civil Service Commissioner because he had a reputation for Civil Service reform and as payment for political services.

Roosevelt worked hard as a Commissioner of Civil Service. Later, however, he again used the spoils system to become Assistant Secretary of Navy. He was not too concerned about Civil Service as governor. As president he appointed well-known spoilsmen to responsible positions for political ends. In his second term he did much for Civil Service and yet he did less for Civil Service in his nearly two terms than Taft did in one.³ Taft did not have a reputation for Civil Service reform.

Most of the reformers at that time were too extreme and would have accomplished very little. Roosevelt accomplished more than they would have accomplished. The question arises, would a less politically minded president have accomplished more than Roosevelt? It is the writer's opinion that a McKinley or a Taft would have accomplished as much and probably more. A study of Roosevelt's career shows many mistakes caused by poor judgement. For example his haste in acquiring the Panama Canal cost the United States friends in South America. His intervention in the Russian-Japanese war was

²Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 13.
³Civil Service Commission, History, 82.
unwelcome. It is the writer's opinion that another president more interested in domestic affairs and without such a drastic flair for publicity would have accomplished more.

It is the writer's opinion that Roosevelt aided Civil Service to a small degree, but that Civil Service aided Roosevelt to a much greater degree.
CHAPTER SIX

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

While numerous books have been written about Theodore Roosevelt, practically none have dealt exclusively with Civil Service and its reform. William D. Faulke's Roosevelt and the Spoilsman, (New York, 1925), is the volume I found to be most helpful. However, this book, written by a rabid follower of Roosevelt, leaves much to be desired in objectivity and factual correctness. A short survey history of Civil Service is the U.S. Civil Service Commission's, History of the Federal Civil Service, (Washington, 1941). Another survey of the history and working conditions of Civil Service can be found in William Seal Carpenter's, Unfinished Business of Civil Reform (Princeton, 1952).

The only adequate critical biography of Roosevelt, recommended by many historians is Henry F. Pringle's, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1931). Theodore Roosevelt and His Time, 2 vols. (New York, 1920) written by Joseph B. Bishop is the most scholarly of the pro-Roosevelt works. Another book which expounds the Roosevelt legend is Edward H. Cotton's, The Ideals of Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1923). This is very flowery and its main tenet is that Roosevelt can do no wrong. Oscar King Davis, Released for Publication (Boston, 1925), is similar to Cotton's work. Charles Grenfell Washburn, Theodore Roosevelt (Boston, 1916), is completely unscholarly and resembles
an apology for some of Roosevelt's actions rather than a biography.

An outdated but good bibliography on Roosevelt is John Hall Wheelock's, *A Bibliography of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1920).

Theodore Roosevelt's own writings are not too numerous regarding civil service reform. His ideas were good and well expressed. Among his best works on Civil Service are *The Merit System and Decent Government* (New York, 1895), and *Address of the Honorable Theodore Roosevelt Before the Civil Service Reform Association of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1891). Perhaps his most interesting work is *American Ideals* (New York, 1897). In this book we see Roosevelt's writings on the problems of the day. It is interesting to compare Roosevelt's words before he became president with his actions afterwards.

Other works of Roosevelt which might prove interesting are *Essays on Practical Politics* (New York, 1888); *Foes of Our Own Household* (New York, 1917); and *Letters Written As United States Civil Service Commissioner* (Washington, 1910). The Addresses and Presidential Messages of Theodore Roosevelt 1902-1904 (New York, 1904) will show the programs of interest to Roosevelt but it covers a limited period. *Reports of the United States Civil Service Commission* (Washington, D.C.) are extremely difficult to use. The earlier volumes were numbered haphazardly. A poor job of editing was done on each volume. It takes a great deal of time to locate specific information.

Darrell H. Smith, *The United States Civil Service Commission* (Baltimore, 1926) is excellently written.

**Early History**

The best study of the Pendleton Act and early attempts at Civil Service reform is Adelbert B. Sageser's, "The First Two Decades of the Pendleton Act,"
in the University of Nebraska Studies, Vol 34;35 (University of Nebraska, 1934-35). A contemporary study of qualifications, tenure and removals from office is Carl Fish's, The Civil Service and the Patronage (New York, 1905).

There are many accounts of reform activities during this period. Willard Brown's, Civil Service Reform in the New York Custom House (New York, 1882), is an account of the improved conditions in the New York Custom House under Civil Service. Similar to Brown's pamphlet is the longer work of Dorman B. Eaton, The Spoils System and Civil Service Reform in the Custom House and Post Office at New York (New York, 1881). Brown wrote as an employee, Eaton as an observer. An excellent work that discusses the reform problems of the day is Thomas C. Devlin's, Municipal Reform in the United States (New York, 1896).

Devlin investigates how reform problems were handled elsewhere and made recommendations for local situations. A very colorful account of his experiences as Civil Service Commission employee is William D. Foulke's Fighting the Spoilsman, (New York, 1919). A long time employee of the Commission, Matthew F. Halloran, wrote of his experiences in Washington, Romance of the Merit System (Washington, 1928).

Philosophy of the Civil Service

Robert C. Brooks, Corruption in American Politics and Life (New York, presents ideas on how to end corruption in government. George M. Carpenter's The Reform of Civil Service from the Party Viewpoint (Rhode Island, 1890), presents ideas on reform in the major parties. Dorman B. Eaton's True Significance of the National Civil Service Act (New York, nd) is one of the first books on Civil Service reform. Truman Smith, The Spoils System (New York 1876), though outdated, presents some interesting ideas.
Other Works


The outstanding biography of President Hayes, Charles R. Williams, *The Life of Rutherford B. Hayes* (Columbus, 1922), while of little help to this paper presented a good picture of attempts at reform during Hayes' administration.

Civil Service in Great Britain

The most extensive study of the British Civil Service is Emmeline W. Cohen, *The Growth of the British Civil Service, 1780-1939* (London, 1941). It is a very scholarly work which traces the history of Civil Service in Britain. Dorman B. Eaton, *Civil Service in Great Britain* (New York, 1880) was written to convince Congress of the benefits of Civil Service. It lacks the scholarship of Miss Cohen's work.

New York Politics

While there is a scarcity of good material on other phases of this paper, there is an abundance of excellent writings on New York politics. Perhaps the best work is Harold F. Gosnell, *Boss Platt and His New York Machine* (Chicago, 1924). In this outstanding book we see man of the intrigues that led Roosevelt to the presidency. A very well written work on Roosevelt and unions...
is Howard L. Hurwitz, Theodore Roosevelt and Labor in New York State (New York, 1943). An excellent study of Tammany Hall is found in The Tin Box Parade (New York, 1934), by Milton MacKay. Thomas Collier Platt's, Autobiography (New York, 1910), while very interesting is mainly a defense of Platt's actions and is not equal to Gosnell's work. A very fine book that deals with politics in New York prior to Roosevelt's rise is De Alva Stanwood Alexander, A Political History of the State of New York, 1861-1882 (New York, 1909). Of more use to was Alexander's later work, Four Famous New Yorkers (New York, 1923). The four men whose activities are the basis of this book are Cleveland, Platt, Hill and Roosevelt. David O. Loth, Public Plunder (New York, 1938), is a study of graft in the United States.

Miscellaneous Works

Ayers Brinser "Our Government for Spoils or Service?" Public Affairs Pamphlet, No. 3, (Washington, 1936) tells young people to enter Civil Service. Interesting observations can be made between the advantages of joining Civil Service then as compared to a later date. William C. Deming, Application of the Merit System in the United States Civil Service (Washington, 1926), explains Civil Service and how it operates. Deming was president of the Civil Service Commission at the time he wrote this book.

Rooseveltiana, edited by Leslie Chase (New York, 1908), is a collection of letters to the editors of New York papers. All the letters are anti-Roosevelt and many are exceptionally bitter. Elisha E. Garrison, Roosevelt Doctrine (New York, 1904), is very pro-Roosevelt. Garrison quotes Roosevelt's speeches on practically every subject.
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