A Comparison of Theodore Roosevelt and Robert La Folette as Representative of the Principles of the Progressive Republican Party of 1912

Lorraine M. Jung
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Part of the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/634

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1947 Lorraine M. Jung
A COMPARISON OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND ROBERT LA FOLLETTE
AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE
PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF 1912

By

LORRAINE M. JUNG

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF ARTS IN LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

JUNE
1947
Lorraine M. Jung was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 24, 1920.

She was graduated from Loretto Englewood High School in Chicago in June, 1938, and from Marycrest College, Davenport, Iowa in May, 1942. At that time, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in History and English and also a teacher's certificate for the secondary schools.

For one year after graduation, the writer was employed as a correspondent by Spiegel, Inc. in Chicago, Illinois. In September, 1943, she became a teacher in the Chicago Public High Schools. For the past three years she has been so employed at Calumet High School. She has taught History, English, and Drama.

In June, 1944, she matriculated at Loyola University as an applicant for the Master of Arts degree in History.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND ITS PRINCIPLES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt's early life--Assemblyman--Running for Mayor--Civil Service Commissioner--Police Commissioner--Assistant Secretary of the Navy--Governor of New York--On the national scene--Leader in New York politics--Robert M. La Follette's beginning--District attorney--Congressman--The Sawyer-Siebecker Affair--Fighting the &quot;machine&quot;--Governor of Wisconsin--Senator.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Roosevelt's stand on Cannon--Progressive Party platform--Woman suffrage--Roosevelt's position on the initiative, referendum, and recall--On the direct primary--The Corrupt Practices Act in New York--La Follette and the direct primary--Eliminating lobbies--Abolishing corrupt practices in Wisconsin elections--Women in politics--The Declaration of Principles and political reform--Roosevelt and La Follette.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>The stand of the Progressive Party--Roosevelt and labor in the Assembly--As Governor--On injunctions--On unions--Department of Commerce and Labor--Employers' Liability Law--The Coal Strike--La Follette and labor--His activity on behalf of employer liability--Civil Service and Roosevelt--Civil Service and La Follette.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>The policy of the Progressive Party--Roosevelt and franchise taxation--Northern Securities Case--Bureau of Corporations--Elkins Act, 1903--Strengthening of the Interstate Commerce Commission--Relations with United States Steel--Roosevelt and the tariff--La Follette and the trusts--On railroad taxation--The railroad commission--La Follette in the Senate--On the tariff--Conservation.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>VI. SUMMING UP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roosevelt's attitude upon his return from Africa—Reason—Indications of Roosevelt's candidacy—Motivation of Progressivism—Roosevelt and the conservatives—Roosevelt on political reform—On trusts—On labor—Contradictory nature of Roosevelt—His usefulness—La Follette and the &quot;Wisconsin Idea&quot;—His stand on political reform—On taxation—Cooperating with the conservatives—La Follette's part in the movement—Summary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND ITS PRINCIPLES

Periodically, when evil conditions reach a climax, a rumble of discontent is heard from the heart of the masses. Sometimes this rumble becomes an avalanche and sweeps all before it as during the French Revolution; again, the rumble moves along evenly and forces the evil conditions to right themselves. Whichever is the case, the periodic stirrings of the people inevitably result in change, and this change, rightly or wrongly, is referred to as progress and the people who advocate it as progressives.

The term "progressive" means different things at different times. According to the dictionary, it is something or someone "aiming at or encouraging advancement toward maturity or completion, or toward a better state." That general definition is well suited for our purposes. Anything more specific is dated for those things for which the "Progressives" stood in 1912 would now be considered conservative. As this chapter develops, the aims and purposes of the Progressive party will be set down. It is with these in mind that we use the term "progressive" as relating to 1912.

The progressive movement did not begin in 1912 nor did it end with the defeat of the Progressive party in that year. Within the last few years, Henry A. Wallace, speaking of the liberal wing of the Democratic

---

1 The Funk and Wagnalls College Standard Dictionary, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1930, 469
party whose acknowledged leader he was and of his defeat for renomination as vice-president of the United States, said "the liberal cause has not been defeated and will not be. It is merely in the process of being reborn. The cause cannot die no matter what may happen temporarily to certain individuals." Irrespective of party affiliations, that is an excellent expression of the significance of progressivism. The movement is the embodiment of the fundamental measures and principles of reform that have been advocated for many years by all political parties.

For many years, America operated, as did the rest of the world, on the principle of "laissez-faire". Everyone, including the mass of the people, felt that the less interference that there was by the government the better off the country would be. For America, this attitude was a reflection of the fact that this country still possessed a frontier. There governments were simple because conditions were simple and people were unable to comprehend the need for a more complex government anywhere. The Civil War marked a change in that attitude.

The Civil War diminished agrarian influence in Congress by the defeat of the South. At the same time, the country's frontier rapidly disappeared and railroads and industrial corporations grew to tremendous size. These factors gave impetus to the progressive movement. There was no longer an escape valve in the west when conditions became too bad

in the east. And the growing business interests saw in the Republican party an opportunity to use the government for their benefit. They gained control of the politicians and bent them to their will. They received huge land grants and franchises from the government in great number. And they made substantial inroads on the natural resources of the nation that should have been the heritage of all. At the same time, they kept the government from interfering in their activities.

And while the corporations were becoming rich, the masses of the people were facing new social and economic problems. Cities were increasing in size and number. The individual worker could no longer compete with the factories. Men became economic chattels forced to live in congested cities and to work in unhealthy factories. Hours were long and pay was low. At first, the people did not turn to their government for relief. They still believed that government interference was bad and that the government was not to be concerned with their problems. They formed unions to fight capital. But the fight was too unequal. The government fought on the side of capital.

The idea that relief from oppression by the business interests could be obtained through government intervention gained ground slowly. One of the groups which promoted the idea was the "Muckrakers" with their social literature. And when the people were converted to this idea, they found that they could no longer force their government to their will. They came to the government which they had made, intending to use it to curb the abuses of capital, and they found that it was already in use by that self-
same capital. Then the people tried to correct the abuses within the
government itself. In response to popular clamor, civil service was intro-
duced. In an attempt to keep corrupt influences from government, laws
for direct primaries were enacted, lobbies were regulated, corrupt prac-
tices acts were passed, and the initiative, referendum, and recall were
introduced. Then, the government, being more responsive to the demands
of the people, passed laws regulating the railroads and the corporations,
and providing for social legislation.

This is an over-all picture of the progressive movement. The Pro-
gressive party was but a part of this. It was only one of the many waves
of insurgency that swept across the country after the Civil War. Two of
the previous outbreaks had found expression in the Greenback and the
Populist parties. These were eventually incorporated into the progressive
element of the Democratic party. It is natural that the Democrats
should have attracted the reformers first because, as the party out of
power, they found much to criticize and change in the administrations.

The Greenback party appeared on the scene in 1876 with a platform
that advocated the unlimited use of paper money "based on the faith and
resources of the nation", and the withdrawal of all bank currency. They
held a national convention that year and placed Peter Cooper in the field
as presidential candidate. The party lost its separate identity after the
election but the dissatisfied elements that combined to make it later

4 Ray Stannard Baker, "The Meaning of Insurgency", The American Magazine,
LXXII, no. 1, 60 (May, 1911).
5 De Witt, 28.
found their way into the other movements coming into being at that time. 6

It was the Populist party that caught up most of the loose ends of progressive sentiment in 1891. The party was the result of the union of several organizations which had come into existence as a result of unrest among the people. It included the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, the Knights of Labor and various other farm and labor organizations. In 1892, the party nominated James B. Weaver for the presidency. The platform that they adopted was very forward-looking and included the direct election of Senators, government control of public utilities, and postal savings banks. The party also advocated certain financial reforms peculiar to it, including the free coinage of silver, increased issue of paper money, and the direct distribution of this money to the people without the intervention of the national banks. The party made a strong showing in the election. In 1896, the Democratic nominee for president, William Jennings Bryan, received the support of the Populists. 7

In 1896, the progressive wing of the Democratic party gained control and nominated Bryan for the presidency. He gathered under his bannar many discordant elements. Although his platform is remembered chiefly for its free silver plank, there were other measures advocated that were of greater importance in the long run. These included the control of corporations, income tax, and direct legislation. It is the first instance of such liberalism in a platform of one of the major parties. But Bryan's

7 Ibid., XIII, "The Populist Party", 5740.
defeat was a serious blow to progressivism in the Democratic party, for, with the rejection of bimetallism, the rest of the platform was discredited also. 8 Bryan continued his control for a time, but by 1904 the Democrats had lost their peculiarly progressive nature. 9

Despite the fact that the Democrats attracted the reformers in greatest number, the Republicans were not without their farseeing men. The Civil War was still a vivid memory when the Liberal Republicans disrupted the party in 1872. Still later, the "Mugwumps" revolted against James G. Blaine. 10 The former movement was the more significant since it actually resulted in the formation of a third party. This was formed essentially in protest of the administration's severe policy toward the South but it did number among its members such a staunch supporter of honest government as Carl Schurz.

Thus it can be seen that the progressives of both parties struggled against corruption within their parties and fought to promote progressive legislation. The Progressive party was one aspect of the movement. It enlisted all types of people—social reformers, champions of the rights of labor, and scions of the business world advocating a greater sense of responsibility to the public—and spread throughout the country. Its battleground was largely the city hall and the state Capitol in the beginning but it eventually reached also into the halls of Congress. 11

8 De Witt, 33-34.
10 Hechler, II.
11 Ibid., 24.
As early as 1897, Mayor Samuel M. Jones of Toledo, Ohio was advocating equal opportunity for all and attempting to provide just that by abolishing the private-contract system of doing city work and by supporting the public ownership of public utilities. At about the same time, Hazen S. Pingree, governor of Michigan, was attempting to introduce the direct primary and more effective railroad taxation in his state. In 1904, William S. U'Ren finally obtained a primary law in Oregon that included the famed "Oregon Plan."

The progressive members of Congress were called "Insurgents". This word was little used before the election of 1908 and did not come into common parlance until after Taft was inaugurated in March of 1909 according to the Insurgents themselves. The word was carried over from international law where it is used to describe the state of armed rebellion preceding recognized belligerency. And it well expressed the position of the progressives, particularly in the Republican party, from 1909 to 1912. The fight in the Senate became pronounced—though not successful—in the fight over the Payne–Aldrich Tariff Bill in 1909. In the House of Representatives, the ouster of "Uncle Joe" Cannon as Speaker in March of 1910 was the work of the Republican Insurgents in league with the Democrats. From that time, the fight went on in Congress between the Insurgents and the "Stand-patters" or Conservatives.

12 Fred E. Haynes, Third Party Movements Since the Civil War with Special Reference to Iowa, The State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1916, 410-417.
13 Hechler, 12, citing The Three Friends, 166 U. S. 1.
15 Hechler, 420-421.
By the end of 1910, the principles of progressivism had become a cause. The term progressive began to be spelled with a capital "P". These men then began to think of banding together in some sort of formal organization to promote progressive legislation in the various states as well as in the nation. When Taft became "persona non grata" with the progressive Republicans, the need for such an organization became more pronounced. Finally, after nearly a year of discussion, Robert La Follette, Senator from Wisconsin, drafted a Declaration of Principles during the holiday recess of 1910. After some changes, suggested by Senators Bourne and Bristow, the declaration was mailed to those members of the two houses of Congress who were progressives and also to the leading progressives in the various states. When the next session of Congress met, the organization that had been so long discussed was founded. 16

On January 21, 1911, the progressive Republicans gathered at Robert La Follette's Washington home and established the organization known as the National Progressive Republican League. 17 Its purpose was to work for simplification of the agencies of government and "the purification of its working so it will reflect and be responsible to the popular will." 18 The first officers were Bourne, president; Frederic C. Howe, secretary; and Charles R. Crane, treasurer. 19

The Progressives felt that the evils of government were due to the

17 Ibid., 495-496.
19 La Follette, 495.
complexity of political agencies, which caused government to fall under the control of special interests. As remedies, they presented their Declaration of Principles. This included direct primaries, direct election of United States Senators, amendments to state constitutions providing for the initiative, referendum, and recall, a thorough-going corrupt practices act, and direct election of delegates to national conventions with an opportunity for the voter to express a choice as to candidates. 20 With these reforms achieved, it was the hope of the Progressives that "the people themselves will be able to purge our politics of the ascendency of special privilege and bring about such other economic and social reforms as they desire." 21

It was the plan of the Progressives to run candidates against the conservatives where ever possible. They were not going to leave the Republican party, however. As can be seen, the platform they advocated stressed political rather than social reform. In this they differed from the Socialists. They did, however, sponsor some economic measures. They favored a lowered tariff, tax reform including an income tax, reform of the currency, a postal savings bank, parcel post, conservation, regulation of public utilities, and pure food and drug and public health laws. 22

After the foundation of the Progressive League, pressure was brought to bear by progressives throughout the nation on the members to put forward a candidate for the presidency. On the thirtieth of April, 1911,

20 Ibid., 495.
21 Letter of Bourne to Costigan, Costigan Papers, 154.
the Progressives met in Senator Bourne's committee room to decide upon a suitable man. 23 The topic was discussed and Robert M. La Follette was decided upon. When he was assured that no other candidate would be put forth and that he would have sufficient financial support, he accepted the nomination. 24

In July, La Follette's campaign got actively under way. Progressive headquarters were opened in Washington, clubs were organized in a number of the states, thousands of circular letters were sent out, and the services of a corps of speakers obtained. Men like Gifford Pinchot, Louis Brandeis, William Allen White, and Francis J. Heney supported the cause. 25

In October, a meeting was held in Chicago attended by approximately three hundred Progressives and arranged by Walter L. Houser, La Follette's campaign manager. This meeting endorsed La Follette. 26 Many newspapers, especially in the Middle West, and the majority of the magazines of the nation came to the support of the progressive cause and its candidate. 27 Enthusiasm for the movement became marked.

Before continuing the history of the development of the Progressive party, it might be well to look at its official position up to this time. On September 9, 1911, the Progressive Republican Conference was held at Montrose, Colorado. There it was stated that the Progressives in Colorado were "undertaking to restore genuine representative government." The

23 La Follette, 516.
24 Ibid., 519.
25 Outlook, "The Insurgent League", vol. 97, 245 (editorial on February 4, 1911).
26 La Follette, 532, also Costigan Papers, 175.
methods to be used should be the establishment of honest elections through a thorough corrupt practices act, a sane and effective civil service law, the recall of unworthy public officials, the Australian ballot and a primary election law. In regard to economic reform, the Colorado Progressives insisted on regulation and control of all public service corporations and their elimination from political activity through the proper application of a public utilities law with strong anti-pass and anti-preference provisions. The movement sought more equal distribution of wealth through the enlargement of the bonds of human rights and opportunities. It favored compensatory damage for victims of industrial accidents, an eight-hour day for women, and control and curb of monopoly, an equalized tariff, and the fair division of the burdens and expenses of government. A summary of the Progressive stand was given in the words: "It (the party) particularly contends that the conservation of men, women, and children—their lives, their liberties, and their opportunities—is the predominant conservation policy in the world." 28

When the Progressives met in Chicago, they presented their stand to the nation in the Chicago Platform which they adopted on October 16, 1911. In this, they restated their foremost idea. The platform said: "The progressive movement is a struggle to wrest the control of government in the nation and states from the representatives of special privilege and restore it to the control of the people." 29 The platform also supported

28 Costigan Papers, doc. 25, (Montrose Address of E. P. Costigan) 165-166.
29 Ibid., "The Chicago Platform of Progressives", doc. 30, 175, citing The Chicago Record Herald, October 17, 1911.
the regulation of trusts but was very careful to bring out the fact that the party favored "constructive legislation, not destructive litigation." Finally, it favored the use of the initiative and referendum and the direct election of representatives to national and state conventions.

Returning now to the history of the Progressive party, we find that in the late autumn and winter of 1911 La Follette made an extended speaking tour of Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois and was greeted with great enthusiasm. But already there was a turning from him to the man who had long been considered the focal point of progressivism in the Republican party, Theodore Roosevelt. By the middle of January, 1911, men like the Pinchots, Medill McCormick, and William Flinn, who had given substantial monetary aid to La Follette, were giving their endorsements and their cash to the Roosevelt "boom". The opportunity for publicly disavowing La Follette came after he gave a long a partially incoherent speech at a banquet in Philadelphia on February 2. It was obvious that the Senator was suffering from over-work. Shortly after this, Pinchot and the other previously mentioned leading contributors to the Progressive treasury announced that La Follette's physical condition made it impossible for him to continue as a candidate. The way was now open for Roosevelt.

It is not our purpose to go into the justice of the treatment of La Follette by the mean who had at first supported him nor of the position

30 Ibid., 176, citation as above.
32 De Witt, 75.
34 De Witt, 76-77.
of Roosevelt in this matter. It is sufficient to know that the change in allegiance came by January of 1912 before La Follette's collapse. Toward the middle of the month, Roosevelt turned his attention to a means of getting into the fray in such a way that his entrance would seem to be in answer to public demand. He decided on the eighteenth of January and the method was to be a letter from some of the governors of the more progressive states in the nation. Meanwhile, headquarters to support the Roosevelt campaign for the Republican nomination had been set up in Chicago by Alexander H. Revell on January 31. Revell visited Oyster Bay, Roosevelt's home, and then called a meeting of the governors saying that he was sure that Roosevelt would respond to an invitation to carry the Progressive banner in the Republican National Convention. This invitation was to be the public demand needed by Roosevelt.

Seven governors attended the Revell meeting—Stubbs of Kansas, Osborne of Michigan, Aldrich of Nebraska, Hadley of Missouri, Bass of New Hampshire, Glasscock of West Virginia, and Carey of Wyoming. On February 10, they sent a message to Roosevelt asking him to lead the Progressive movement. On February 13, Roosevelt announced that he was considering the call of the governors and on the twenty-fourth, he accepted their invitation to lead the movement.

35 Letter of (J. S. Temple) to Gifford Pinchot, January 3, 1912 and Reply, January 12, 1912, Costigan Papers, 181-182.
36 Pringle, 555.
39 Payne, 52.
40 Rosewater, 42.
It was Roosevelt's original intention to battle only for the Republican nomination for the presidency against Taft in the National Convention. There seems to have been no thought of a third party early in 1912. From February until the convention met in June, Roosevelt and Taft hurled hard words at each other and the campaign was every bit as bitter as any that took place between the candidates of different political parties. It became obvious, however, that Roosevelt was fighting a losing battle because many states were choosing two rival sets of delegates and Taft's followers controlled the seating of these disputed delegations. Thus, by the end of May, Roosevelt's utterances were threatening the creation of a third party if his candidacy were rejected.

The Republican National Convention met in Chicago from June 18 to June 22, 1912. Most of its attention was given to the question of seating delegates. Roosevelt, himself, was in Chicago to lead the fight for his candidacy but to no avail. On the night of June 19, it became obvious that the Roosevelt delegates were not to be seated. At two o'clock the following morning, before a crowd of shouting, sweating men in the Florentine Room of the Congress Hotel, Roosevelt made the announcement that was to split the Republican party and result in the election of Woodrow Wilson. He announced that, if the convention would not accept his delegates, he would not allow his name to be put in nomination and, thus, a new party

---

41 Pringle, 556-557.
42 Ibid., 563.
43 Ibid., 562.
was born. 45 As soon as Taft was nominated, with most of the Roosevelt delegates refusing to vote, his followers left the convention. 46 On that same night, June 22, a meeting was held in Orchestra Hall at which the delegates pledged their support to Roosevelt. 47 He, in an address to the group, urged them to return to their homes and encourage progressive sentiment and then come together in August for a convention of their own. 48

The Progressive party convention met in Chicago on Monday, August 5, 1912. Albert J. Beveridge, former Senator from Indiana, was made temporary chairman and gave the keynote speech. He was later made permanent chairman. On August 6, Roosevelt gave a speech known as his "Confession of Faith". The following day, the permanent organization was effected, committees' reports were adopted, and the platform accepted without opposition. Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for the presidency and Hiram Johnson of California for the vice-presidency. Both men accepted and the convention was adjourned that evening. The whole affair had been conducted amid the wildest enthusiasm with the singing of hymns and patriotic songs and great demonstrations. 49

Roosevelt's "Confession of Faith" was a lengthy document in which he roundly condemned the old parties as "husks, with no real souls within either, divided on artificial lines, boss-ridden and privilege controlled,

45 Payne, 19-26, Also Pringle, 565, citing New York Times, June 20, 1912.
46 Bryan, 82.
47 Pringle, 565.
48 De Witt, 83.
49 Bryan, 248-249.
each a jumble of incongruous elements, and neither daring to speak out wisely and fearlessly what should be said on the vital issues of the day." 50  
He proposed to change all this and "boldly to face the real and great questions of the day", "to raise aloft a standard to which all honest men can repair, and under which all can fight, no matter what their past political differences", and "to put forth a platform which...shall be a contract with the people...and...we shall hold ourselves under honorable obligation to fulfil every promise it contains as loyally as if it were actually enforceable under the penalties of the law." 51

The "Confession" continued to express the views that went into the making of the Progressive party platform. Roosevelt stated that the political bosses and the privileged interests were with Taft and Wilson and wanted to defeat the Progressives. He insisted that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans were to be trusted in the promises they made. And the speech contained a suggestion of paternalism in the passage that it was his aim "to use the government as an efficient agency for the practical betterment of social and economic conditions throughout the land." 52

As far as actual promises were concerned, Roosevelt wanted a national law for Presidential primaries, a corrupt practices act, the initiative, referendum, and the recall. He desired the people to have the right to interpret the constitution and this idea was incorporated in the party platform in the form of a plank advocating an easier and more expeditious method

50 Ibid., 250.
51 Ibid., 250. This summary of Roosevelt's speech is taken from Bryan's report in his story of the convention, 250-278, and, henceforth, only direct quotations will be foot-noted.
52 Ibid., 252-253.
of amending the Federal constitution. 53 Also on the political question, Roosevelt and the Progressives advocated woman suffrage.

For the working man there were many reforms suggested. Industry was to publish wage scales and such other data as would be of public interest, such as diseases, deaths, and injuries due to occupation, for inspection by the public and committees of the workers concerned. Furthermore, minimum wages were to be established, standards of safety and sanitation were to be enforced, and compensation for industrial accidents and deaths were to be paid. Child and woman labor was to be prohibited or regulated and was never to be night work. Finally, hours were to be regulated to the extent that women were not to work more than forty-eight hours a week and all workers were to be entitled to one day a week of rest.

There were the usual kind words for the farmer and suggestions were made for improving his lot. None of these were very positive, however, consisting as they did mainly of suggestions that the farmer's life and that of his wife be made more attractive and more profitable. It was also suggested that the Country Life Commission, recently abandoned, be revived.

Roosevelt devoted more time in his speech to a discussion of the trusts and their control. He pointed to his own record in this respect as exemplary. He maintained that "our aim is to control business, not to strangle it." 54 He felt that "the only effective way in which to regulate the trusts is through the exercise of the collective power of our people as a

53 Ibid., 281.
54 Ibid., 262.
whole through the governmental agencies established by the Constitution for this very purpose." 55 He suggested strengthening the Anti-Trust Law and also setting up a commission to regulate and control all the great industrial concerns engaged in interstate transactions.

The Progressives and their standard-bearer favored a protective tariff but one "approached from the standpoint of the interests of the whole people, and not as a bundle of preferences to be given to favored individuals." 56 A commission of non-partisan experts was to be selected to examine the question of the tariff. This commission would then make suggestions to Congress which would then make the necessary revisions schedule by schedule rather than treating the whole tariff as a single bill.

An improvement in the national currency system was advocated. The issuance of money by private agencies was deplored as harmful and unscientific. It was felt that the government alone should issue money and that the currency should be sufficiently elastic to meet the changing needs of the country.

Roosevelt also advocated the maintainance of the army and navy at a high pitch of efficiency. He wanted the Panama Canal fortified and felt that we should not have to pay tolls on our own coastwise traffic that passed through it. As far as other foreign affairs, were concerned, he favored friendly relations with all nations.

Finally, both Roosevelt and the platform devoted a great deal of time and space to conservation. It was urged that all natural resources that

55 Ibid., 265.
56 Ibid., 268.
were not already in the hands of private interests be retained for the use of posterity. Waste land should be reclaimed and the use of natural resources, such as water power, should be rigorously supervised by the states or the nation.

The Progressive platform was a reflection of Roosevelt's speech. It did, however, contain some additional planks. One of these provided for public recall of judicial decisions. It also held for a limited use of injunctions in labor disputes and the establishment of a Department of Labor with a seat in the Cabinet. The platform advocated a graduated inheritance tax and supported the Constitutional amendment then pending establishing an income tax. Finally, there was the usual support for a soldiers' bonus and the usual criticism of the administration's use of the civil service law.

After the enthusiasm of the conventions and the bitterness of the Taft-Roosevelt pre-convention quarrel, the actual campaign was anti-climax and roused little interest. The most exciting thing that happened was a shot fired at Roosevelt in Milwaukee on October 14, 1912. Roosevelt acted very nobly in the situation, saving the culprit from a lynching and going on with his scheduled address.

But all the fine promises of the platform and all the heroics of Milwaukee were unavailing. After the uninspiring campaign, the voters went to the polls and the results were as had been expected. Woodrow Wilson was elected with 435 electoral college votes to 88 for Roosevelt.

57 Ibid., 279-295.
58 Pringle, 568-570.
and only 8 for Taft. The popular vote was not as one-sided, however. Wilson received 6,286,124 votes; Roosevelt 4,126,020; and Taft 3,483,922. As can be seen, the two Republican candidates polled more votes than did Wilson, but the split in the party defeated them. Moreover, there were many progressives who preferred to vote for Wilson rather than Roosevelt for the Democratic candidate was also considered a progressive. Because of this, also, Roosevelt did not gain any strength from the progressive Democrats as he had hoped to.

After the election, Roosevelt withdrew his support from the Progressive party and, in its 1912 version, it all but went out of existence. Its death knell, on a national scale, was sounded by Roosevelt's refusal to run in 1916, although it did continue to have some life in the various states. But there its existence was more of a substantiation of the claim that the progressive spirit is never dead than any formal carry-over of the Progressive party of 1912.

59 Ibid., 570.
60 De Witt, 86-87.
61 Pringle, 570.
CHAPTER II
LOOKING AT CAREERS

Having viewed the progressive movement, we can now turn our attention to the two men who were its leaders in 1912. Before looking at their specific records on some of the major problems of the day, it might be wise to take a bird's eye view of their careers up to the point where we find them engaged in the heated campaign of 1912. Here, as in all subsequent chapters, we will begin with a consideration of Theodore Roosevelt.

Theodore Roosevelt was born on October 27, 1858, the second child and older son of Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., of New York and Martha Bulloch Roosevelt of Georgia. The boy was born in his father's home on then-fashionable East Twentieth Street and had the advantages of wealth, travel, and fine education in his youth. All, however, was not easy for him for he had to overcome the handicap of a frail body and weak eyes. His fight against his physical disabilities is too well-known to recount. Having overcome his disabilities, Roosevelt matriculated at Harvard and was graduated from there in June, 1880. It is from that date that we follow his political career. 1

Throughout his life, Roosevelt was a great believer in doing things rather than just talking and this characteristic was one of the things which turned him to politics as a career. He wanted to take part in

1 This paragraph is a summary of Pringle, Chapters I to IV, 1-53.
everything that was going on and that included civic affairs in his community. He wanted to be one of the governing class and if that necessitated going into politics he would go into politics despite his friends' objections to the type of men with whom he would have to associate. Roosevelt was very definite about this himself for he later said that he did not enter politics "to benefit other people, but (as a means) of getting for myself a privilege to which I was entitled in common with other people." 2 Any other course would have been inconsistent with the character of the man who said: "The prime thing that every man who takes an interest in politics should remember is that he must act, and not merely criticize the actions of others." 3

Once Roosevelt's interest was aroused, he promptly took steps to make himself a part of the political organization of his ward. He followed his own advice that "if he (a man) goes into politics he must go into practical politics, in order to make his influence felt." 4 He began his career by joining the Twenty-first District Republican Association in New York in 1880, the very year that he graduated from Harvard. The Club was controlled by a very practical politician named Jake Hess. 5 The first six months or so of Roosevelt's membership in the Club were without the explosive qualities that marked his subsequent political career. He was involved in studying law at Columbia Law School during the winter and went

---

5 Roosevelt, Autobiography, 64.
to Europe with his wife in the spring. When he returned from that trip, he found himself, for the first time, a candidate for public office. 6

The Twenty-first District Republican Association was having a bit of internal difficulty in the fall of 1881. Joe Murray, an ex-Tammany Democrat, was working for Hess but had ideas of his own. One of them concerned Theodore Roosevelt. Murray decided to press for the nomination of Roosevelt for the position of Assemblyman from the District against the candidate put forward by Hess. After some hesitation, Roosevelt agreed to go along with the plan. Murray was himself an astute politician and his plan worked. Roosevelt was nominated in the party caucus. 7 Once the nomination was made, Hess, despite Roosevelt's assertion that he was elected in spite of the "machine", 8 supported the young aristocrat. His course might, in part at least, have been dictated by the fact that the rich Republicans of the district had lost confidence in the local Republican leadership, and, since their contributions were necessary, Hess hoped to restore their goodwill with an Assemblyman whom they all knew personally. 9

As a candidate, Roosevelt attracted some attention outside of his own district. The New York Times praised him as "a public-spirited citizen, not an office seeker." 10 He was endorsed by the Council of Reform, and

---

6 Pringle, 46, 59.
7 Roosevelt, Autobiography, 67.
8 Ibid., 67.
10 Pringle, 61, citing New York Times, Nov. 6, 1881.
other civic organizations. But he was wise enough to realize that the support that really counted was that of the Republican machine and, sensibly, allowed its leaders to conduct the major portion of his campaign. There actually was not too much work to be done for the Twenty-first was a solidly Republican district. Roosevelt was easily elected and prepared to take his seat in the legislature at Albany. Although he did not go with the unqualified blessing of his organization's boss, Hess felt more kindly toward him because of his campaign attitude that proved that he did not intend to ignore the machine completely.

Much of Roosevelt's work in the Assembly will be treated under the proper chapters so a brief summary will suffice here. He served until April, 1884 and attracted considerable attention to himself during that time. The legislature, at that time, was in part composed of a group of men called the "black horse cavalry" who supported, usually by selling votes, the special interests. Roosevelt developed as the natural leader of the opposition to this group. Roosevelt, himself, mentions these men when he estimated that about a third of the members of the New York legislature were open to corrupt influences in some form or other.

The new Assemblyman first attracted attention to himself when he attempted to force the impeachment of Judge Westbrook. The Judge was in

11 Ibid., 61.
14 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 50.
the grip of the business interests and Roosevelt and his friends came in the possession of some correspondence to prove this. The Assembly refused to take up the charges against the Judge but Roosevelt was determined. Against the advice of his friends and associates, he forced the issue and kept talking in the legislature until public pressure and interest in the case necessitated the appointment of a committee to investigate the charges. Westbrook was "whitewashed" but everyone knew that it was just that and Roosevelt had achieved a moral victory. 15 He had also placed himself firmly in the public eye. Thayer goes so far as to say that this affair was the "deciding act in Roosevelt's career." 16

Thereafter, his legislative career was less spectacular although Roosevelt was made the minority leader of the assembly after the Democratic victory in the state in 1882. This was a great honor for one so young and virtually without precedent for one with only a single year of experience behind him. 17 While Cleveland was governor of the State, Roosevelt worked with him and supported many of the reform measures that he attempted to enforce, including civil service reform. 18 In general, Roosevelt supported those measures that would encourage clean government, worked against the special interests, and, unhappily in view of his future record, was unfriendly toward labor, especially organized labor. But more of that later.

15 Howland, 14-15.
17 Pringle, 74.
18 Ibid., 75.
In the summer of 1884, Roosevelt was a delegate-at-large to the Republican National Convention. He supported the candidacy of the Senator from Vermont, George F. Edmunds, and worked hard for him in order to defeat the Republican bosses' choice, James G. Blaine. When Blaine was nominated, however, Roosevelt stood by his party's choice despite his convictions. 19

After the Convention and campaign, Roosevelt retired to his ranch in the West. He remained in "retirement" until the mayoralty election in New York City in 1886. That year Henry George ran for mayor as the representative of the laboring class. The Democrats opposed him with Abraham S. Hewitt, an independent of great wealth. The Republicans, had they been interested in saving the city from the radical ideas of George, should have supported Hewitt. But he was too honest to allow the usual division of spoils between the machine Republicans and Tammany if he should win. Moreover, the Republicans hoped that, since George had labor's support and the Democrats pretended to be the party of labor, George would take more votes from the Democrats and that their candidate might slip into office. Roosevelt was approached and accepted the nomination. But the great fear of George on the part of business, forced many Republicans to vote for Hewitt and Roosevelt was defeated, running third. 20 Thereupon he went to Europe and faded from the spotlight for a time.

When Harrison was nominated by the Republicans in 1888 to oppose

19 Howland, 21-23.
20 Pringle, 113-115.
Cleveland, Roosevelt took the stump for him. After Harrison was elected, he repaid Roosevelt for his efforts by appointing him a Civil Service Commissioner. This was in May 1889, and Roosevelt served until May 1895. While on the commission, Roosevelt steered its policies and enforced its regulations with the utmost vigor. His enthusiastic support gave great impetus to the cause of Civil Service reform.

Roosevelt moved directly from his job on the Civil Service Commission in Washington to one of the New York City Board of Police Commissioners. He was appointed by the anti-Tammany but Democratic Mayor Strong. Roosevelt was handicapped in his position as president of the board by the arrangement that made unanimous consent necessary for any real action but he did work hard and enthusiastically. He attempted to take politics out of the force and gave great publicity to all that the commission did in order to keep alive public interest and support. He, himself, gives a good summary of the work he did:

Our method for restoring order and discipline were simple, and indeed so were our methods for securing efficiency. We made frequent personal inspections, especially at night. We then proceeded to punish those guilty of shortcomings, and to reward those who did well. The days of political "pull" were over while we had the power.

As police commissioner, Roosevelt stopped the wanton brutality of policemen but he backed up strong action where it was necessary. He stopped

21 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 100.
22 Howland, 39, also Thayer, 89.
23 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 119, also Howland, 40.
24 Howland, 43.
25 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 127.
blackmail by enforcement of the law. That he was successful is attested to by the fact that in February, 1897, the Judge who addressed the grand jury of the month congratulated them on the fact that there was less crime in New York City relative to the population than ever before. 26 Finally, however, New York had enough of reform and the corrupt influences in the city were able to force Roosevelt's resignation. 27 That was in 1897 and the ex-commissioner was on the threshold of greater things.

In return for his support of McKinley in the election of 1896, Roosevelt was once more in line for a position in Washington. His old friend, Henry Cabot Lodge, supported his ambitions. 28 Finally, on April 6, 1897, McKinley sent his name to the Senate for confirmation as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The nomination was confirmed on April 8 and Roosevelt assumed his duties on April 19. 29 The Secretary of the Navy Long was a conservative, elderly gentleman who was overshadowed by his forceful, bellicose, and outspoken assistant. 30 Roosevelt was a firm believer in a big navy and worked diligently toward that end. Moreover, he looked forward with a degree of enthusiasm to the war that was brewing with Spain. He did everything he could to put the navy on a war footing and the excellent condition of that branch of the service in the Spanish-American War was due in no small part to his efforts. 31

Once war had broken out, Roosevelt desired to get into active service.

26 Ibid., 134.
27 Hurwitz, 149.
29 Ibid., I, 72.
30 Pringle, 170.
He succeeded and the episode of the "Rough Riders" is so well-known as to need no retelling. Moreover, since it has no relation to the question of this paper—although very important to the furtherance of Roosevelt's career—we can content ourselves with no more than a mention of this period. Roosevelt enjoyed himself greatly while in Cuba and then returned home to find his political future very bright indeed.

While Roosevelt was in Cuba, Thomas C. Platt, Senator from and boss of New York State, did some serious thinking relative to a Republican candidate for governor of his state in 1898. The party was concerned because of a threatened exposure of undue extravagance in repairing the Erie Canal. Platt needed a strong candidate to maintain his hold on the state and the name of the leader of the "Rough Riders" was constantly being put before him. Platt did not at first want Roosevelt but his lieutenants convinced him that the Colonel—the name Roosevelt acquired in the Spanish-American War and which clung to him from that time on—would attract the needed independent voters because of his reform record and would, moreover, be free from any connection with the canal scandal. Roosevelt was approached and was not, at first, over-enthusiastic about the prospects of being governor of New York. He preferred national politics. Nothing was forthcoming in that line, however, so the governorship became more.

32 Pringle, 201.
34 Pringle, 202.
attractive. Roosevelt called on Platt to discuss the nomination. It was his in return for a promise that he would not make war on the Regular Republican organization and that he would consult Platt, especially in making appointments. 35 Roosevelt, after his election did live up to this promise and consulted Platt in reference to almost all appointments although he sometimes disregarded his advice, especially where candidates for judicial positions were concerned. 36

Once he received the nomination, Roosevelt made the campaign one of the "hoopla" and "hurrah" type with great emphasis placed on his war record. But it took a statement from Richard Croker, the Tammany leader, to the effect that Justice Daly had not been renominated to the Supreme Court of the state because he refused to make certain appointments in his court that were recommended by the organization to elect Roosevelt. The Republicans cried for "an untrammeled judiciary" and the people were roused to action. 37 Even then, Roosevelt was elected by the small majority of 17,794. 38

A great deal more will be said about the legislative advancements made during Roosevelt's administration later. He did support civil service reform, franchise taxation, economy in government, and increased honesty among public servants. 39 He, himself, felt that he had been an outstanding

35 Gosnell, 96.
36 Ibid., 207 ff.
37 Ibid., 142-143.
38 Pringle, 207.
success as governor but he was a trifle over-enthusiastic. He did succeed in obtaining an improved civil service law, a corporation franchise tax, and a few other miscellaneous reforms of lesser consequence. One thing that restricted his efficiency as a reformer was his connection with platt. He could not, or would not, openly defy him, preferring to compromise. Roosevelt, himself, best summed up his ideas on the subject of compromise while he was governor in a speech before a State Bar Association banquet on January 8, 1899:

It is not possible for any man ever to do or to get all that he would like to do, or all that he would like to get in the way of good government and in the way of striving to see his ideals realized...Perhaps we must always advance a little by zig-zag; only we must always advance; and the zig-zags should go toward the right goal. 40

As Roosevelt's term as governor drew to a close in 1900, his name was mentioned for the vice-presidential spot on the national ticket led by McKinley. Roosevelt did not receive the suggestion with any great happiness. He felt that it was the road to oblivion. Neither Mark Hanna nor McKinley liked Roosevelt on the slate, either. 41 But when the convention met, it nominated Roosevelt. This was largely due to Platt's influence. Platt wanted him out of New York where his reforms were alienating the wealthy contributors to the Republican party. 42 And with the presidency at stake the wishes of the boss of the state with the largest electoral vote could not be overlooked. Thus it was that Roosevelt became

40 Ibid., 250-251.
42 Gosnell, 123.
Roosevelt was wrong in his estimate of the vice-president's job. It led not to oblivion but directly to the White House itself for President McKinley was assassinated in September of 1901 and Roosevelt succeeded to the presidency. To even summarize his career there would be a lengthy undertaking so we will leave those things which concern us to be treated under the proper chapters. We can say, though, that Roosevelt's accession did cause consternation among business men. Roosevelt, however, indicated his willingness to work with his party leaders and even submitted his first annual message to Hanna for his suggestions. He showed a willingness to consult with the regular Republicans although he did not always follow their advice. His first term was not particularly productive of reform legislature—his chief achievements consisted of obtaining an amendment to the Elkins Act and setting up a bureau of corporations to investigate corporate practices. This may have been the result of an alleged agreement with Senator Aldrich, the arch-conservative, giving Roosevelt a free hand in foreign affairs in return for the president's non-interference in legislative affairs.

Despite the apparent surface peace, there was a feeling of opposition

43 Rhodes, 114, citing Croly, Life of Hanna, 341.
44 Pringle, 238.
45 Rhodes, 221.
between Hanna and Roosevelt that became public in May of 1903. Already Republican eyes were turned toward the election of 1904 and Hanna was being considered as a candidate. In May of 1903, Foraker, the senior senator from Ohio and a foe of Hanna, came out for Theodore Roosevelt and demanded that the Ohio Republican Convention, meeting in June, do likewise. Hanna opposed such a resolution and thus made evident his disapproval of Roosevelt. 47 Hanna, however, did not actively seek the nomination, probably because of his advanced age and precarious health. 48 Despite his disapproval, and that of business, he kept his opposition quiet and Roosevelt was nominated for a second term and elected.

It was of this second election that Roosevelt wrote: "It is a peculiar gratification to me to have owed my election...above all to Abraham Lincoln's 'plain people'." 49 And it was to these same people that Roosevelt directed many of his public utterances. He had the happy faculty— for a politician—of making himself loved by the masses. Yet Roosevelt was not one to sacrifice all for an ideal. Throughout his terms in the White House, he was a good party man. He wanted to and did "work with my party and make it strong by making it worthy of popular support." 50

In 1906, Roosevelt finally displaced Platt as boss of New York politics. Frank W. Higgins represented him in the state and, in that year,

47 Rhodes, 261-282.
48 Ibid., 287.
49 Bishop, I, 345.
50 Ibid., I, 150.
they succeeded in having Wadsworth elected United States Senator. 51 Thus when his term in the White House ended, Roosevelt had someplace to turn. He had established himself as a political leader of New York Republicans—especially the more liberal minded among them.

In 1910, after returning from his African hunting trip, Roosevelt was urged by the progressive Republicans of his state, under Lloyd C. Griscom and Herbert Parsons, to accept the position of temporary chairman of the Republican State Convention. The progressive group were opposed to the machine led by William Barnes, Jr. After some hesitation, Roosevelt accepted but he refused to run for governor or any other office. 52 At this convention, whose chairman Roosevelt became, a direct primary plank was adopted, "this being the main fight as far as progressive planks went." 53 After the convention, Roosevelt became an observer of political developments until his entrance into the campaign of 1912. Of this we shall say more later.

In summation, Roosevelt was a man of many advantages. His father, whom he greatly admired, was a philanthropist who worked for social welfare and his example quickened Roosevelt's sense of obligation to the community. 54 But he was preeminently a practical idealist. He felt that two gospels should be preached by every reformer: "The first is the gospel of morality; the second is the gospel of efficiency." 55 Furthermore he believed "in

51 Gosnell, 352.
52 Payne, 30-31.
53 Ibid., 35.
55 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 27.
the duty of the man who preaches to preach realizable ideals." 56 His philosophy is best summed up by Howland, a loyal supporter of his. Howland said of him that he believed in getting things done and would compromise on the method but not on the principle. If he couldn't obtain all that he wanted, he would take what he could get. Roosevelt chose "the companionable road of practical idealism rather than the isolated peak of idealistic ineffectiveness." 57

It would be unfair to say that Robert La Follette was ineffective and he was sufficiently practical to gain the control of an entire state, yet he differed from Roosevelt in that he was one who never compromised. It was La Follette's way or not at all. 58 He believed passionately that, where a principle was involved, "no bread is often better than half a loaf." Once a compromise was written into the law, he felt, you had lost your chance to fight for a true reform bill. 59 This made him much harder to work with and much less popular than Roosevelt. But to understand La Follette, it is best to go back to the beginning of the story.

Robert Marion La Follette had the right beginning for a politician of his time. He was born in a log cabin on June 14, 1855, in Primrose, Dane County, Wisconsin. 60 His ancestors had come to Wisconsin from

---

57 Howland, 21.
59 La Follette, 268.
60 Dictionary of American Biography, "Robert M. La Follette", Frederic A. Paxson, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938, X, 541. All factual information regarding Mr. La Follette's life is from this source unless otherwise footnoted.
Kentucky with a short stopover in Indiana. While in the former state, the La Follettes had been neighbors of the Lincolns. In fact, young Bob La Follette's background is remarkably like that of Abraham Lincoln. La Follette was left without a father while still an infant and, as soon as he was able, he took over the management of the family's affairs. When he was nineteen, he sold the farm in Primrose and moved his family into Madison. But, even before that time, the influences that made La Follette a progressive were already at work. He says himself: "As a boy on the farm in Primrose Township I heard and felt this movement of the Grangers swirling about me; and I felt the indignation which it expressed in such a way that I suppose I have never fully lost the effect of that early impression." 61

La Follette entered the University of Wisconsin, then a struggling prairie school, with the class of 1879. Things were not easy at the University. La Follette was still responsible for the welfare of his family and, as a consequence, it was necessary for him to have some means of income. To solve his problem, he purchased the University Press, then the only college paper and not very prosperous, and turned it into a paying proposition. He also helped to pay expenses by teaching school. While at the University, President Bascom had a tremendous influence on the youth. He was constantly reminding his students of the debt they owed to the state and instilling in them a "proper attitude toward public affairs." 62

61 La Follette, 19.
62 Ibid., 28.
La Follette, although he did not lead his class scholastically, evidently learned this lesson well.

After his graduation in 1879, La Follette spent some five months studying law, dividing his time between the University's law school and a law office in Madison, and was admitted to the bar in February, 1880. He was then without funds and in rather desperate need of money because of his obligations. The district attorneyship of Dane County looked very attractive. As a result, La Follette began to canvass the territory with a view to getting himself elected to the job. Before long, the Republican "boss" of that time, Colonel E. W. Keyes of Madison, informed him that he (La Follette) was not going to be the next district attorney of the County—"Boss" Keyes had already chosen the man, and it was not La Follette. 63

But La Follette was only spurred to greater effort by the incident. By his own hard work and with the help of his former classmates at the University, he succeeded in winning the election without the support of the machine. One thing that convinced the thrifty farmers that he should be elected was the fact that he promised to try all the cases brought before the court without employing additional help, a system which had long been in vogue. La Follette kept his promise and the farmers showed their satisfaction by reelecting him for a second term—the only Republican to win on the county ticket. 64

In 1884, after completing his second term as district attorney,

63 Ibid., 11.
64 Frederic C. Howe, Wisconsin, An Experiment in Democracy, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1912, 6.
La Follette was encouraged to run for Congress by his friend and associate, Sam Harper. The suggestion found favor with him almost at once. He had acquired a relish for public work and a love for the political arena that never left him. He and Harper immediately began to canvass the district. Once again the political bosses told him that he was wasting his time and money. But La Follette had gone to the people with his campaign in 1880 and he was prepared to follow that plan again. The farmers of his district knew about the work he had done and they liked the way he took them into his confidence and made them a part of his endeavors. They nominated him in the convention and they then elected him with a majority of 491. Then just twenty-nine years of age, he was the youngest member in the House.

After securing for himself the position of Representative, La Follette began to realize how little he knew of national problems. As a result, he went to Washington in January, 1885, although the Congress to which he was elected did not meet until the following December. He hoped in that way to acquaint himself with some of the questions then under discussion. This is typical of the thoroughness that marked his course. As one writer has said of him: "La Follette is one of our deepest, most painstaking, and most cautious students, a man who speaks only after months, even years of investigation, and not then unless he has arrived at a constructive

---

65 La Follette, 43-45.
66 Howe, 6-7.
67 La Follette, 48.
When La Follette returned to Washington to begin his term of office, he immediately felt the influence of the senior Senator from Wisconsin, Philetus Sawyer, a multi-millionaire lumber man and one of the bosses of the state. Sawyer was very nice to him but when the young Congressman expressed a desire to serve on the Committee on Public Lands, Sawyer looked askance at the idea. He was finally appointed to the Committee on Indian Affairs where his "radical views" would be less of a hinderance to the schemes of the politicians. But La Follette still managed to make himself heard. He spoke against the "pork-barrel" bill for river and harbor appropriations in 1886. He also worked to protect the Indian lands from the railroads. His action made the machine back in Wisconsin determined to defeat him for reelection in 1886. But La Follette had a way to beat them.

His early experience had taught him that in order to beat boss rule it was necessary to have an informed electorate. As soon as he was elected he got a list of the voters in his district and then proceeded, while he was in the House, to send these people copies of all speeches made on pending legislation in their particular field of endeavor. He followed this system with only the necessary modifications throughout his public

69 La Follette, 53-57.
70 Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits, "Senator La Follette", Brentano's, New York, 1923, 158.
71 La Follette, 75.
life. He says himself that this is probably the reason that he never got rich in politics since most of the printing bills he had to pay himself. But he also says that this was the only way for him. 72 Despite the expense, it was worth while in furthering his career for "one great secret of La Follette's political strength was his constant touch with the masses of the people. He had respect for their understanding and, once he had determined upon a policy, he laid it before the voters at length with all the arguments in support of it." 73 He followed this method now and was reelected, not only in 1886, but in 1888 as well.

During the 1889-1891 sessions, La Follette came to the fore as a member of the Ways and Means Committee. This was a coveted position and he obtained it as a result of a speech which he had given the previous session on the Mills Bill. While on the Committee, he served with the future president McKinley and became a great admirer of his. He also did noteworthy service on the preparation of the McKinley Tariff Bill. This same bill helped to defeat La Follette, however, in 1890. The high tariff which it authorized brought difficult times to the farmers and, in addition, the Bennett law had passed the state legislature and this, with its regulation of the schools of the state, had turned the Catholic and Lutheran vote against the Republicans. La Follette went down to defeat with the rest of his party. Despite the fights which he led against the party bosses in Wisconsin, his "tendency to insurgency" did not appear to

72 Ibid., 63-67.
73 Raney, 304.
74 Ibid., 284.
any extreme extent. While he could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be called a "stand-patter", he had usually voted with the party. He did not during his time in the House separate himself irreconcilably from his party and this is important, for it means that, had he so desired, he could still have allied himself to the regular Republicans and taken advantage of the opportunities that they had to offer.

When he returned to Madison following his defeat, La Follette turned his attention to his law business. "Any thought...of returning to the public service was vague and remote." Yet the lure of political life was upon him and it was inevitable that he should return to the battle field. An event occurred in September of 1891 that served to both return him to the fray at once and to crystallize his antipathy toward machine politics.

For years it had been the habit of the state treasurers to deposit the revenues of the state in certain favorite banks and then appropriate the interest on the money for themselves. No one objected to the system until the Democrats got into power after the 1890 landslide. The attorney-general then promptly brought suit against the defeated Republican treasurers to recover hundreds of thousands of dollars of back interest. Senator Sawyer was the principal bondsman for the treasurers and stood to lose $3,000,000 if the case were decided in favor of the state. The case was to be heard by Judge Robert J. Siebecker, La Follette's brother-in-law and his former law partner. Shortly before the trial was to begin, Sawyer

---

75 La Follette, 136.
asked La Follette to meet him at the Plankington House Hotel in Milwaukee, and the latter agreed. What happened when the two men met is a subject that is disputed. According to La Follette's story Sawyer attempted to bribe him. Sawyer claims that he was merely trying to employ La Follette as an attorney in the case.

Whatever is the truth in the case, the results were far-reaching. La Follette, after consulting some of his closest friends, went to Siebecker and told him what had occurred. The judge promptly withdrew from the case and that gave rise to a great deal of speculation as to the reason. No announcement was forthcoming and La Follette made no statement. Sawyer, however, in an interview in the Milwaukee Sentinel said that he had tried to hire La Follette as an attorney in the case and that the latter had misconstrued his purpose. In the face of such a statement, La Follette presented his side of the affair. This cost him a great deal for he knew that his action would split the Republican party in the state and that the machine would now resolve to completely destroy him and would use every means at their command to discredit him with the people. Indeed, one author says of this time that "his (La Follette's) greatest battle was with his conscience on the Sawyer-Siebecker deal." 76 But good came of the abuse and calumny which the machine-controlled newspapers and the machine politicians heaped upon La Follette. Out of the experience came the determination to destroy the power that was corrupting and undermining the

76 Richard Lloyd Jones, "Among La Follette's People," Colliers, XLV, no., 24, 18 (Sept. 3, 1910.)
government of the State. 77

In 1892, despite the objections of the regular organization, La Follette took the stump for the Republican candidate for the presidency, Harrison. He did not discuss state issues, but he did keep his place in the Republican party and in the eyes of the public. And his courage in facing the wrath of Sawyer's men set at rest any question as to the integrity of his motives. 78

In 1894, La Follette decided to put forward a candidate for governor in opposition to the machine's candidate despite the fact that there was no real chance for success. Nils Haugen, one of his associates in Congress, was chosen for the hopeless trial and gave up his seat in Congress for the endeavor. 79 La Follette and his helpers--most of them former associates of his at the university--worked feverishly. They did not succeed in nominating Haugen but they did put their men in the rest of the places on the ticket. This victory encouraged them tremendously. 80

The La Follette group began to increase in size despite the fact that they did not, at that time, have a broadly constructive policy. La Follette attracted the younger and more progressive element to him and the group became known as "Half-breeds" by the regular Republicans. 81 He was appealing for followers primarily of the program of overthrowing corrupt

77 La Follette, 142-164. The story of the Sawyer-Siebecker affair is a summary of it as it appears in the Autobiography.
78 Howe, 11.
79 Haugen, 113.
80 Ibid., 12.
81 T. S. Adams, "The Drama of Wisconsin Politics", The Independent, LIX, no. 2800, 1824 (July 31, 1902).
When the campaign of 1896 came around, La Follette announced that he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor. For a time it looked as though he might secure the honor but the political bosses "reached" many of the delegated pledges to him. As a result, he lost the nomination. Then La Follette decided to go to the people once again.

In 1897, La Follette made a tour of the various county fairs, telling the people about the reforms which he advocated. To further help his cause, some of his friends purchased a small weekly newspaper in Madison and renamed it The State. Even these steps did not secure the nomination for governor for La Follette when he sought it again in 1898, but the pressure on the machine was so strong that the bosses were forced to incorporate many of the reform measures in their platform of that year. Once elected, however, they completely forgot their promises. The people remembered this when the 1900 election arrived.

In 1900, after six years of trying, La Follette was finally nominated and elected governor. From the people of Wisconsin, he received the unprecedented plurality of 103,745. As governor, La Follette's troubles continued for, although the Assembly was progressive, the Senate of the state was still controlled by the bosses. More will be said of these problems later on.

82 La Follette, 186.
83 Ibid., 204-207.
84 Howe, 14.
In addition to these difficulties with the legislature, La Follette had to face a "smear" campaign on the part of the bosses. At this time one of them bought the Sentinel, one of the few large papers in the state that had previously supported him. The papers were filled with stories of the unconstitutional way in which he tried to force the legislature to pass the bills which he wanted. They said that his program of regulating business would drive capital from the state. Finally, to add fuel to their fires, La Follette became ill during the legislative session of 1901 and the bosses tried to convince the people that he was physically incapable of handling his office. This last was strangely prophetic of 1912.

When the campaign of 1902 approached, the bosses organized the Wisconsin Republican League—usually referred to as the "Eleventh Story" League because it had its headquarters in the eleventh story of a Milwaukee office building. The League spent money lavishly and used every method known to discredit the "Half-breeds" and their cause. But La Follette believed that platforms were pledges to the people and that they should be lived up to, and showed where the "Stalwarts" had not done this. The people believed him. He was reelected by a majority of 47,599, and this time he could count on a sympathetic legislature.

85 Ibid., 15-16.
87 Howe, 16.
The legislative session of 1903 passed most of the reform measures which La Follette advocated. There was one, however, which the governor could not get through the legislature. This was a bill that would fix the rates for railroad transportation, these rates to be based on a physical evaluation of the railroad's property. This was just the issue which La Follette needed to take to the people. He felt that another term of office was needed to "securely ground and bulwark self-government in Wisconsin." As a consequence, he took the relentless logic of statistics to the county fairs and showed the people how they were being plundered by discriminating freight rates and charges.

The Republican convention was held in Madison in 1904. The "Stalwarts" bolted the convention after La Follette was renominated and nominated a ticket of their own. La Follette was named by the convention of his supporters to head the Wisconsin delegation to the National Republican Convention to be held in Chicago that same year. This is important because the "Stalwarts" also chose a delegation and when the two delegations arrived in Chicago those from the "Stalwart" convention were seated despite the fact that the courts of Wisconsin had declared the La Follette men the true representatives of the people of the state. Paxson suggests the fact that Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate for the presidency, did not object to the seating of the unlawful delegation aroused "in

88 La Follette, 320."
La Follette a conviction that his progressivism was neither genuine nor dependable." 89

La Follette was reelected in Wisconsin, this time with a majority of 40,000. 90 He continued his reform program making common use of commissions to study various problems. This gave great impetus to the University of Wisconsin and did much to bring that school to national prominence. By the end of 1905, the progressive movement in Wisconsin and the "Wisconsin Idea"—the name given to the reform ideas of La Follette—were fully launched. 91 In the five years that he had been in office through tireless effort "La Follette had transformed a state ruled for and by the corporations into an object lesson in social and economic democracy." 92

La Follette was ready to move to higher levels and in 1905, the legislature of the state appointed La Follette to the United States Senate. The governor did not resign his office, however, until he had his program for the state completed. In 1906, he felt this was done and want to Washington to take his place in the Senate.

There is no need to follow La Follette's career as a Senator in detail here. He took a uniformly progressive stand on measures before the Senate. One thing that served to mitigate his usefulness was the fact that he early began to think of the presidency. One source puts the time as early as

90 Howe, 17.
92 Mowry, 49.
1907. This ambition made him anxious to steal the spotlight on all occasions and made teamwork difficult. 93

One measure against which La Follette took a very strong stand was the Payne-Aldrich Tariff. La Follette marshalled his forces to fight it as soon as its nature was evident and when the bill was put to a vote, there were ten Republicans who voted with the Democrats against it. This is generally regarded as the beginning of the national insurgent movement. 94 The bill eventually passed but the opposition to it had solidified the progressive sentiment in the Senate. Moreover, opposition to it resulted in the election of the Democrats in 1910. The day of the "Stalwart" Republicans was drawing to a close.

The battle over the Payne-Aldrich Tariff gave some excellent indications of the light in which La Follette was held by the "Stalwarts." When Taft was trying to swing the Progressives' votes to the bill, he invited men like Beveridge, Clapp, Borah, and Dolliver to wine and dine with him in the hopes of "converting" them. But he made no move toward La Follette or Cummins of Iowa because he knew that they were unchangeable.95 La Follette's stand on this tariff so enraged Taft and the eastern businessmen that they made plans to defeat him in the Wisconsin primaries in 1910 when he was running for the Senate. 96 Their plans, however, failed.

93 Haugen, 151.
94 Raney, 297.
95 Mowry, 63.
96 Ibid., 111.
The story of La Follette after his return to the Senate and his part in the formation of the National Progressive Republican League and the campaign of 1912 have already been discussed in Chapter I. In summary, we can say that La Follette did his greatest work as governor of Wisconsin where his efforts to educate the electorate were able to be effective. On the national scene, too often his efforts were confined to opposing undesirable legislation because so many of his suggested bills never appeared after they once went to the committees. His influence on state governments and their management was unequalled. His leadership was preeminently that of a crusader and a reformer. Yet "his cargo of reforms was too heavy for good political navigation". Moreover, his previously mentioned inability to work with others and to allow them to sometimes put forth the ideas and get the credit, reduced his usefulness. Yet he did great good. His ideas of an educated electorate is sound democracy and the example he set served to awaken public thought and conscience and to stimulate to action.

98 Raney, 304.
CHAPTER III

POLITICAL REFORM

Woodrow Wilson characterized progressivism as "all those policies whose object is to wrest government from the control of special groups of men, and restore it to the country. All the policies that re-establish the connection between representatives and the people." 1 The political reforms that the government advocated were directed to this specific end. They were designed to do away with the political "bosses" who controlled the party machinery and with the economic "bosses" who often controlled the political ones. We want to turn our attention now to a consideration of the stand of the subjects of this paper on the all-important question of political reform.

Every reformer has his strong point and it would not seem that political reform was Theodore Roosevelt's. That is not to say that he was completely uninterested but there were other problems with which he was more concerned. This, in part at any rate, may be due to the fact that Roosevelt was, until 1912, always on good terms with his party and received its support when running for public office. He was a strong believer in party unity. 2 It might be said that he was always one of the party although not always one with it.

2 Pringle, 90.
Long before the Progressive platform defined that party's stand on question of political reform, Roosevelt had an opportunity to voice his objection to the system of boss rule as evidenced in Congress. As he was leaving office, the Insurgents in the House of Representatives asked his support in their attempt to oust Cannon as Speaker of the House. Roosevelt maintained that he could do nothing, although he did approve of their course, because he did not know how Taft would stand on the matter. He did, however, promise to write a letter, that was not for publication, which the Progressives could show to their friends and which would express his stand. On the day before he left office, Roosevelt said that he could not write the letter after all but offered to introduce two of the Insurgents, Nelson and Gardner, to Taft and to intercede. He took them to Taft, who was in another part of the room, but Taft has stated that he only introduced them and made no plea for their cause.

After Taft was elected, he suggested to Roosevelt that Cannon be removed as Speaker. Roosevelt was most unenthusiastic about this, pointing out that, though he believed the step was desirable, it would not be expedient. On this evidence it would not seem that Roosevelt was overly eager to destroy the power of the political bosses as represented by Cannon in 1909.

The Progressive platform devoted some of its most concrete planks to

---

3 Hechler, 50, citing John M. Nelson, interview, Feb., 1939.
4 Ibid., 51.
5 Mowry, 42.
the discussion of political reforms. These included the publication of campaign contributions and expenditures, the registration of lobbyists, public committee hearings in Congress, except on foreign affairs, and the recording of votes in committee, and a ruling that federal appointees could not take part in political conventions for nomination of elective state or national officials nor could they hold office in state or national political organizations. 6 The plank on the most important questions of political reform was equally definite and is worth quoting in full:

The party declares for direct primaries for the nomination of State and National officers, for nation-wide preferential primaries for candidates for the presidency; for the direct election of United States Senators by the people, and we urge on the States the policy of the short ballot, with responsibility to the people secured by the initiative, referendum, and recall. 7

The platform also urged the extension of the vote to women. 8 There remains now the examination of the records of Roosevelt and La Follette in the light of the Progressive party platform.

As was common with the masculine leaders of the day, neither Roosevelt nor La Follette was active in the fight for woman suffrage. Roosevelt, however, evidently did give some thought to the matter for, as governor of New York, he recommended to the legislature in his annual message of 1899 the "desirability of gradually extending the sphere in which the suffrage can be exercised by women." 9 I could find no evidence, however,

---

7 Ibid., 305.
8 Pringle, 567, citing Letter of Roosevelt to Taft, Oct. 12 and Nov. 10, 1908, Roosevelt MSS.
9 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 25.
that he followed up this recommendation and in 1912 it seemed that the idea was new to him and he gave it only half-hearted support. 10

The major questions of the hour revolved around the initiative, referendum, recall, and direct primaries. An examination of the stands of Roosevelt and La Follette on these will be a good indication of their interest in and positions regarding political reform.

Roosevelt's position on these matters of major importance does not seem to have been consistent. When the Insurgents in Congress were just beginning to unite on a program, both La Follette and Bourne wrote to Roosevelt who was then on his safari in Africa. They asked his opinion of the policies of the group—those policies that were later included in the Declaration of Principles of the National Progressive Republican League. Roosevelt replied that he was not at all decided about the recall, the initiative and the referendum, but agreed with the rest of the program.11 It would seem that, in early 1910, Roosevelt was not convinced of the wisdom of these reforms.

When Roosevelt returned from Africa in June of the same year, he found that the direct primary was an issue in the New York campaign of that year and that the liberal Republicans, whose leader he had been, were supporting the bill under Governor Hughes. Roosevelt joined the fight. On June 29, 1910, just eleven days after his return from Africa, he sent a

10 Pringle, 567.
11 Mowry, 176-177, citing Letter of Theodore Roosevelt to La Follette, Jan. 3, 1910 and to Jonothan Bourne, Jan. 2, 1910, Roosevelt MSS.
telegram to the chairman of the New York Republican State Committee giving his approval to the direct primary bill and expressing his earnest hope that it would be made a law. This placed him in the forefront of the fight for the bill in his state. 12

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, Roosevelt became chairman of the New York State Republican Convention when it met in 1910. He dominated the convention and carried all his points. 13 Out of this convention came a genuine direct nomination plank for the Republican platform. 14 This would seem as though Roosevelt was a supporter of the direct primary. But at this very time, Roosevelt was writing to Henry Cabot Lodge:

Hughes made a fight on an issue upon which the people were not really aroused...He had created a situation, and had put me in a situation, where the least of two evils was to stand by him. The fight is very disagreeable....There is no way out of it that I can see. 15 This would hardly seem that Roosevelt was enthusiastic in his support of the primary bill. The people of New York were no more enthusiastic. The legislature had defeated the bill in July and the people defeated the Republican candidate for governor, Henry L. Stimson in November. 16

In the summer of 1910, before the New York Republican Convention met, Roosevelt went on a speaking tour of the West. At Osawatomie, Kansas, on August 27, he gave the famous speech that formed the basis of his New

12 Bishop, II, 299-300.
13 Ibid., II, 304.
14 Payne, 35.
16 Pringle, 537-538.
Nationalism. Yet, despite his progressive ideas on other subjects, he made no mention of the initiative and referendum, no did he mention the recall of judicial decisions that became a part of the Progressive party platform. 17

When the National Progressive Republican League was formed early in 1911, its leaders naturally asked Roosevelt for an endorsement. He hedged. He told Bourne that though he was in sympathy with its purposes, in a general way, he felt that certain limitations and safeguards should be added. He said that he was uncertain about the recall on a national scale. 18 Whatever his feelings were on the other specific measures which the organization advocated, Roosevelt's name was not among those sponsoring the League.

Roosevelt's failure to support the League and his criticism of some of its measures are most amazing in view of his activities early in 1911, right after he had refused to lend the prestige of his name to the League. He went on another of his speaking tours, this time through the South and the West. At Phoenix, Arizona and several places in California, he specifically advocated the recall of judicial decisions, saying that he favored it only when, by actual experience, the people were driven to it in order to do away with some serious evil. 19 The members of the League must have been not a little confused by this since the recall was Roosevelt's

17 Ibid., 543.
18 Ibid., 548-549, citing Letter of Roosevelt to Bourne, Jan. 2, 1911, La Follette Papers.
19 Bishop, II, 310.
greatest objection to the League's Declaration. It must also have been confusing to the readers of Outlook for in his article on the League in that magazine, Roosevelt had given it only lukewarm support and had made no mention of the initiative, referendum, and recall. 20

Roosevelt finally completely allied himself with the principles which the Progressives had been fighting for when he made known his candidacy for the nomination for the Presidency in 1912. On February 21, speaking at Columbus, Ohio, he gave his "A Charter of Democracy" speech. In this, he termed himself a Progressive and declared his support for "all governmental devices which will make the representatives of the people more easily and more certainly responsible to the people's will." 21 Among these devices, he included the recall of judicial decisions, the initiative and referendum on legislation, the short ballot, popular election of United States Senators, direct primaries, presidential preference primaries, and popular election of delegates to national nominating conventions. He closed his address "with an earnest plea for social justice, for the moralization not only of political conditions, but of industrial conditions." 22 Thus did Roosevelt unequivocally place himself on the side of the Progressives and begin his fight for the presidential nomination in 1912.

There remain only a few more points to make regarding Roosevelt's stand on political reform. Even after his campaign as an independent Progressive

20 Pringle, 349, citing Outlook, January 14, 1911.
21 Haynes, 427.
22 Ibid., 427.
candidate in 1912, he evidently entertained some doubts as to the wisdom of all the measures which his platform had contained. After the direct primary for president was written into the Democratic platform in 1912— their convention met before the Progressive convention—Roosevelt championed it but he then changed his mind although his own platform contained a presidential preference plank. 23 Shortly after the election was over, Roosevelt expressed his doubts as to the wisdom of another of his platform's planks. In a letter to a friend in Boston, he showed a definite weakening in his support of the recall as applied to judges. 24

In conclusion we must mention the platform plank for a corrupt practices act. Roosevelt advocated this in his speech before the Progressive convention in 1912, 25 but seems to have done little more about it. His own state of New York did not pass such a bill until 1909, 25 and I found no record that he had worked for such a measure earlier.

In summarizing Roosevelt’s stand on the questions of political reform, we cannot help but be struck by his inconsistency on the subject. That he was a firm believer in honesty in government cannot be denied, 26 but he was evidently in doubt as to the wisdom of the specific measures advocated

---

24 Letter of Roosevelt to George D. Crocker, November 19, 1912, Bishop, II, 348.
25 S. Gale Lowrie, Corrupt Practices at Elections (Comparative Legislative Reference Department), Madison, Feb., 1911, 51, citing New York Consolidated Laws of 1909, Ch. XVII, secs. 175, 365, 543-561; Ch. LXXXVIII, secs. 751-782.
26 Hurwitz, 77.
by the progressive element in both parties. He probably did not give great thought to the matter until forced to do so when he began his fight for the Republican nomination in 1912. He had directed his reforming efforts previously toward different abuses. As has been said, this may well have been due to the fact that Roosevelt laid great stress upon party loyalty, and never, before 1912, had an actual falling out with the regular members of his party. Under such circumstances, he could hardly be overly critical of the methods employed by that party to keep itself in power.

La Follette's record on political reform was very different from Roosevelt's. It was really a major part of the program which he sponsored for Wisconsin and which gave him his reputation as a reformer. La Follette was especially interested in the direct primary and did some of his greatest work in its behalf. Indeed, even an apologist for the "Stalwarts" in Wisconsin said of him:

> It must be acknowledged that to Robert M. La Follette should be given whatever credit is due for the ultimate adoption of the primary election system in Wisconsin. While others may have originated the plan and dreamed over its success at some future time, he took the matter in both hands and went out to cultivate the crop, even if he did not sow all the seed.

But La Follette's interest was the result of an unhappy experience with the Republican party in Wisconsin and before this time his record was not unsullied.

27 Rhodes, 218.
La Follette made use of all the tricks of the political trade and took under his banner all recruits without scanning their motives in joining him nor their actions in the field while he was engaged in his fight with the political "bosses" of Wisconsin. 29 In 1894, when he was promoting the nomination of Nils Haugen for governor, he did not oppose the use of the caucus and convention system and he used some pretty sharp, though legal, practices in attempting to control both of these bodies. 30 In 1896, he suggested to Haugen and Judge Emil Baensch that they, along with himself, become candidates for the Republican nomination for governor with the understanding that all would throw their votes to the leader in the convention. Haugen refused but La Follette and Baensch went into the convention with this idea. They were both defeated, however. 31 Also, La Follette did not object to collecting campaign funds from state employees in early 1900. Haugen recalled that his last contribution to the La Follette campaign fund was in the spring election of delegates to the National Convention in 1912. 32

Yet it would not be fair to judge La Follette on the basis of these efforts of his to "fight fire with fire." In fact, he was from his earliest days in politics the opponent of the political overlords of his state. His first position was obtained in the face of the opposition of the Republican

29 Barton, 29.
30 Allen Fraser Lovejoy, La Follette and the Establishment of the Direct Primary in Wisconsin, 1890-1904, (vol. 1, Patterson Prize Essays), Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1941, 30.
31 Haugen, 118.
32 Ibid., 141.
"boss" of his territory. He did not owe his election to Congress in 1884

to the "bosses", either. 33 La Follette definitely split with his party over
the Sawyer-Seibeker affair in 1891 34 although he did not immediately settle
upon the principles of political reform that later became a part of his
program.

La Follette resolved upon the direct primary as an answer to "boss"
rule in 1896. In that year, he was a candidate for the governorship. Many
districts of his state sent uninstructed delegates to the convention although
the caucuses in those same districts had expressed a preference for La
Follette. This prevented his obtaining the nomination. Knowing that the
fault lay with a "system that permitted corrupt agents to betray their
principles", La Follette resolved never to compromise with the system and
never to give up the fight until he "had made government truly representative
of the people." 35 From that time one, one matter was supreme with him
and that was the primary election law. On that he set his heart despite the
fact that some of his followers had their doubts and expressed them to him. 36

La Follette began a study of the direct primary question and, in
February of 1897, he was ready to give public utterance to his ideas. In
that month, he gave a speech at the University of Chicago in which he
publicly advocated for the first time primary elections for the direct

33 La Follette, 43-45.
34 Ibid., 142-164.
35 Ibid., 195.
36 Haugen, 138.
nomination of all political candidates. In concluding this speech, La Follette outlined a model law. It provided for nominations petitions to be signed by a certain per cent of the voters of a district at the last general election, and set down strict rules regarding pre-primary caucuses, electioneering, bribery, and the canvassing of the vote. It also stipulated that a committee to formulate platforms should be elected along with the party's candidates. 37

After this speech, La Follette continued his campaign for the direct primary throughout the year 1897. On July 5, he spoke at Mineral Point, Wisconsin and promoted his direct primary plan. He also attacked the state administration's attitude on the corporation and taxation questions. 38 On August 20, he reiterated his belief in the direct primary in a speech at Fern Dell and on March 12, he gave his famous Ann Arbor speech. 39 There, before the students of the University of Michigan, La Follette took an unequivocal stand in favor of the abolition of all caucuses and conventions and the nomination of all candidates for state, congressional, legislative, judicial, and local offices by a direct vote of the electors, using the Australian ballot. 40 This speech on "Primary Elections" was important because it received nation-wide publicity and made La Follette a national figure. 41

La Follette's work began to bear fruit. Although he was again defeated

37 Lovejoy, 35.
38 Barton, 80.
39 Ibid., 80.
40 Philipp, 21.
41 Lovejoy, 43.
for the Republican nomination for governor in 1898, the regular state Republicans adopted a plank in their platform, in response to public sentiment, that suggested that they would establish the primary law in 1898. The plank was most indefinite, however, merely admitting that there were defects in the caucus and convention system and promising legislation that "would secure to every citizen the freest expression of his choice in the selection of candidates." 42 Yet it was a step forward and La Follette's county fair campaign was largely responsible. 43

In 1900, it was obvious that La Follette would again be a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor. Yet, in the early part of the year, he made no mention of the direct primary. This was evidently in the interest of party harmony and an effort to obtain additional support from the less conservative members of the "Stalwart" faction. This silence led many to believe that La Follette had given up his pet theory and when they found otherwise they felt that they had been duped. 44

Once La Follette was assured of the nomination in 1900 by the defection of the other candidates, he came out so strongly for a primary bill that it was obvious that he would not run on a platform which did not have it as a plank. 45 When the convention met, he insisted on, and got, a platform pledge providing that:

caucuses and conventions for the nomination of candidates should be abolished by legislative enactment, and that all

42 Philipp, 21.
43 Lovejoy, 38-39.
44 Philipp, 25-27.
45 Lovejoy, 52.
all candidates for state, legislative, congressional and county offices be nominated by a primary election upon the same day by direct vote under the Australian ballot. 46

Even this unequivocal statement did not alienate the regulars for in 1900 all Republicans worked for La Follette's election, including such "Stalwarts" as Spooner and Quarles. 47 During the campaign, the candidate made few references to reform. La Follette was also working for party harmony. 48 Once the campaign was over and he was elected, it was a different matter, however. We can now trace the history of primary legislation in the Wisconsin legislature.

The first attempt to regulate primaries by law in Wisconsin antedated La Follette's interest in the subject by many years. In 1891, the Keogh law was passed but this applied to Milwaukee county only. 49 The Keogh law was amended at each session of the legislature through 1897. Up to this time, the men who subsequently became the leaders in the fight for primary election reform had taken no hand in the framing of such laws as passed the legislature to better conditions. The movement had been an evolutionary one. The last of the evolutionary measures was the Lange bill, passed in 1899, which extended the operation of the primary law to the whole state in a modified form. It was essentially an experiment. 50

But before 1899, the revolutionary movement to affect a real change

46 Philipp, 27.
47 Lovejoy, 47.
48 Barton, 163.
49 Philipp, 10.
50 Ibid., 17.
and improvement in the situation had begun. The sentiment growing among
the people was evidenced by many things. Philipp, an avowed opponent of
the "Half-breeds" says of this time:

Already the revolutionary movement had been foreshadowed by
the introduction of a sweeping direct primary election bill
in 1897 by Assemblyman William T. Lewis of Racine, in public
addresses by Robert M. La Follette, a tentative bill prepared
for publication and publicly circulated by Hon. L. J. Nash of
Manitowoc, and a bill introduced in the assembly by Gen. George
E. Bryan in 1899 as a suggestion of what Mr. La Follette then
advocated. 51

The Lewis primary bill was the first of the truly progressive measures
introduced into the Wisconsin legislature. When he was elected, Lewis had
two projects which he hoped to have the legislature consider. One concerned
convict labor, which he hoped to keep from competing with free labor; the
other was the direct nomination of all candidates at primary elections. 52
On arriving in Madison, he asked La Follette to draw up the primary bill to
introduce to the legislature. La Follette was then working on his speech
for the University of Chicago so he turned the job over to his law partners,
Sam Harper and A. G. Zimmermann. He did, however, carefully supervise the
provisions of the bill. 53 The bill was indefinitely postponed on recomman-
dation of the committee which reported it to the assembly. 54

The second bill to require nominations by direct vote was introduced
in the legislature by Bryant in 1899. This is the bill referred to above.
This measure was almost identical in its provisions with the Lewis bill and

51 Ibid., 18.
52 Ibid., 20.
53 Lovejoy, 35, also Barton, 78-79.
54 Philipp, 20.
it met the same fate at the hands of the legislature. 55

When the legislature next met La Follette was governor of the state and the Republican platform had expressed its approval of the primary election bill. It seemed reasonable to expect some positive action on the measure. Yet, before the measure came up for consideration, there were rumors that the "Stalwarts" would attempt to defeat it. On January 9, 1901, one of the Madison papers printed an article to that effect. 56 Whether this is true or not is a matter of dispute. Philipp maintains that it is not and says that the Senate committee on privileges and election was not packed with anti-La Follette men thus proving that there was no conspiracy afoot. He holds that there were three administration men on the committee, one "progressive" who was neutral, and one "Stalwart". 57 Lovejoy tells a different story. He divides the committee into two administration men, two "Stalwarts"—he moves Senator Hatton from La Follette's camp—and one neutral. The latter, in both cases, was Senator Whitehead, who, although not yet allied with the "Stalwarts", was felt to be opposed to La Follette's primary measure. 58 As events developed, he later did oppose the bill. 59 In view of Philipp's patently anti-La Follette attitude and on the face of the records of the men involved, Lovejoy's explanation seems the more reasonable.

The primary bill of 1901 had an extremely stormy trip through the

55 Ibid., 20.
56 Lovejoy, 56, citing Madison State Journal, Jan. 9, 1901.
57 Philipp, 30.
58 Lovejoy, 59.
59 Ibid., 64.
Wisconsin legislature before finally being vetoed by the governor. The administration's measure was introduced simultaneously in the Assembly by E. Ray Stevens and in the Senate by George P. Miller on January 28. Both were promptly referred to committee. On March 18, the bill came before the Assembly. It was placed on the agenda for the following day. The March nineteenth session began at 7:30 P. M. with both the administration forces and the "Stalwarts" ready for battle. Before the measure could be brought to a vote, E. A. Williams, one of the members who opposed passage, moved "a call of the house." The following morning, after a hectic all-night session, the governor's followers finally got the bill "ordered to engrossment and a third reading". It was then placed on the calendar for final consideration. 60 On March 22, the Stevens bill passed the Assembly and was sent to the Senate. 61

In the Senate, the bill encountered great difficulty. When it was first realized that there would be trouble over it, the "Stalwarts" suggested compromise. They offered to refer the measure to the people at the elections in April, 1902. The administration supporters refused because the machine always was organized for election but many people who were independent voters voted only in November. The "Half-breeds" thus reasoned that the "Stalwarts" could defeat the measure. 62

The primary bill came up for consideration by the Senate on April 11. But before this, on April 9, two opposition Senators, Hagemeister and

60 Philipp, 36, 41-44.
61 Lovejoy, 59.
62 Ibid., 63.
Kreutzer, introduced bills as substitutes for the administration measure. The Hagemeister bill was crudely drawn and provided for the nomination of county officers only at primary elections. Kreutzer's bill provided for the election of delegates to all conventions as well as the election of the county officers at primaries. 63 It was a much more carefully prepared bill but fell far short of the demands of the administration.

The original primary bill sponsored by La Follette was defeated by the Senate, 20-13. Another attempt at compromise was made by the "Stalwarts" but was rebuffed by the administration. After some maneuvering by both sides, Kreutzer withdrew his bill and left the way clear for the Hagemeister measure. He then offered an amendment to the bill in the form of a referendum clause submitting it to a vote of the people. This was carried. The Hagemeister bill was then passed by the identical vote which had defeated the measure supported by La Follette. 64

When the Hagemeister bill reached the governor, La Follette showed his determination to work for a real reform measure. He vetoed the bill and sent the Senate a scathing reprimand. Even his critic, Philipp, admitted that "Governor La Follette was justified in vetoing the Hagemeister bill." 65 La Follette realized that if he signed it, he would have no further opportunity to strive for an acceptable bill. This was consistent with his theory of not taking half a loaf when there was a chance of getting the

63 Philipp, 47.
64 Ibid., 47.
65 Ibid., 47-48.
whole loaf with a little added effort. 66 La Follette explained his position to the people of the state and he could feel fairly sure of their sympathy because of the nature of the bill presented to him. One of the current magazines commented on it in an editorial, saying that "a more farcical bit of legislation has rarely commanded the approval of even the anti-reform elements." 67 The people of Wisconsin, who had elected La Follette overwhelmingly on a platform calling for a strong direct primary bill, could not help but be aligned on the governor's side.

In 1902, La Follette was again the Republican nominee for governor. He made the question of direct primaries one of the major issues of his campaign. In his opening speech, he stated that the primary election bill was "part of the Progressive movement." 68 He went on to answer the objections of his critics to the effect that the primaries would result in minority candidates being nominated with the irrefutable argument:

Better an honest plurality representing the honest judgment of a large constituency than a machine-made convention majority which expresses the will of only a small coterie of political bosses. 69

He concluded his speech with a summary of the situation as he saw it.

The problem of government today is protection from public service corporations and political machine domination. Direct nomination of all candidates by the people offers a simple, practicable solution. It is for us with simple courage and patriotism to discharge our plain duty to the state. 70

66 La Follette, 268.
67 Outlook, "Governor La Follette's Ringing Message, vol. 68, no. 4, New York, 201 (editorial in the issue of May 25, 1901).
69 Ibid., 72, citation as above.
70 Ibid., 73, citation as in note 68.
Despite La Follette's stand on the direct primary and his criticism of the "Stalwarts", Spooner and the other "Stalwart" leaders told their followers to vote for him in 1902 for the sake of party unity. Thus, La Follette, as well as Roosevelt, was helped by the machinery of the Republican party. In La Follette's case, however, after his one peace effort in 1900, no further efforts were made by him to promote party harmony within the state.

La Follette was elected in 1902 and it was obvious that the primary bill would be brought to the attention of the legislature once again. The primary election law was accordingly introduced into the Assembly on February 2 and was rapidly passed on February 6, 1903 by a vote of 70 to 19. It was just as rapidly referred to the Senate, reaching that body on February 9. 72

Once it reached the Senate, the bill had a more difficult time. It was referred to the Committee on privileges and elections. On March 26, the bill was reported out of the committee with minor amendments. In the discussion that followed, Senator Gavney added a referendum amendment. The bill was then passed on the same day by a vote of 18 to 15. The Assembly accepted the Senate measure on March 31 but struck out the section on the referendum. On April 1, the Senate voted to adhere to the amendment on referendum and the bill then went to conference between the houses.

After much debate, an agreement was finally reached. It was finally

71 Raney, 289.
72 Philipp, 65-71. The history of the progress of the primary election bill of 1903 is taken from these pages.
agreed to submit the entire matter to a vote of the people at the November election in 1904, instead of submitting the question of applying the law to the nomination of state and legislative candidates only. The bill, with this provision for referendum, was passed by both Assembly and Senate and was ready to go to La Follette on May 20. He signed it and the matter was then up to the people.

In 1904, the people of Wisconsin elected La Follette governor for the third time and also expressed their approval of the direct primary election bill. Although only about half as many people voted for the bill as voted for governor, the measure was overwhelmingly approved. Out of a total of 210,891 votes cast, 61.9 per cent or 130,699 votes were in favor of the direct primary, while 31.1 or 80,192 votes were against it. This gave the bill a majority of 50,507. 73

Wisconsin was the first state to adopt the state-wide direct primary 74 and the credit for this reform—one of those advocated by the Progressive party—must go to La Follette. And La Follette did not end his devotion to the cause after it was achieved in Wisconsin. When he wrote the Declaration of Principles for the National Progressive Republican League, he included it as one of the policies for which the League would fight. 75 And this was before the Progressive party platform was written.

An investigation of La Follette's stand on some of the other policies

73 Lovejoy, 91, also Philipp, 82.
75 La Follette, 495-496.
supported by the Progressive party platform is now in order. Because of the difficulty which his own state had with the lobbyists, he was an early opponent of this group. When his followers founded their newspaper, The State, in 1897, they gave a summary of La Follette's program. In addition to its advocacy of the direct primary, the platform included a recommendation to enact and enforce "laws to punish bribery in every form by the lobby in the legislature and wherever it assails the integrity of the public service." 76 In announcing his candidacy for the governorship in 1898, La Follette continued this idea by speaking strongly against the lobbies. 77 Then when he was elected governor, in his first message to the legislature, in 1901, La Follette urged that lobbies be curbed by legislation. 78 His recommendations were ignored until the progressive legislation of 1903. That year, Wisconsin got its law governing lobbies. It required all lobbyists to register with the secretary of state, giving the names and business of their employers; and further provided that no lobbyist should hold secret communication with legislators or legislative committees. 79 La Follette continued his interest in the reform and it was likewise included among the Principles of the National Progressive Republican League.

The program of La Follette as given in The State also included a demand that laws be enacted and enforced to prohibit corrupt practices in election. 80

76 Ibid., 209-210.
77 Barton, 110-111.
78 Ibid., 167.
79 La Follette, 320.
The following year, 1898, the first corrupt practices law was passed in Wisconsin forbidding corrupt practices at elections. 81 In 1905, while La Follette was governor, the law was strengthened. It then provided that "illegal registration or voting is punished by fine or imprisonment" and that all candidates had to file statements of expenditures within thirty days of the election or be fined. 82 In 1907, the law was extended to apply to primary elections as well as general ones. 83 And this reform was another one of those which La Follette included in the program of the League.

Although La Follette was far from a suffragist, he evidently did feel that women should take a more active part in the government. In his message to the legislature in 1901, he showed that he was at least abreast with the times on this question by recommending that women be appointed on various educational and charitable boards within the state. 84

Finally, in concluding this section on La Follette and political reform, it might be well to review again the National Progressive Republican League's Declaration of Principles. These were written largely by La Follette and show his feelings almost two full years before the Progressive party was formed. In addition to the previously mentioned provisions relative to the direct primary, to control of lobbyists, and the corrupt practices act, the Declaration asked for the direct election of United States Senators,

81 Lowrie, 71, citing Wisconsin Revised Statutes, 1898, secs. 13, 4478-4546.
82 Ibid., 71, citing Wisconsin Laws of 1905, ch. 313, 502.
83 Ibid., 71, citing Wisconsin Laws of 1907, ch. 666, secs. 11-24.
84 Barton, 167.
direct election of delegates to national conventions with an opportunity
for the voter to express a choice as to presidential candidates, and
amendments to the constitutions of the various states providing for the
initiative, referendum, and recall. 85 This would seem conclusive proof
that La Follette gave thought to the problem of political reform and favored
it.

On the basis of the evidence presented, it seems obvious that La
Follette's record on political reform had more to commend it than did
Roosevelt's. He was interested in the problem from the very beginning of
his career while Roosevelt was still expressing doubt when the League
was formed in 1911. 86 Another thing that counts heavily in La Follette's
favor is the fact that he achieved his reforms without the aid of Roosevelt,
then president and considered a leading progressive. It was generally
understood that the national administration was hostile to the Wisconsin
movement during Roosevelt's incumbency. He gave Federal appointments to
the "Stalwarts" in the state upon the recommendation of the Wisconsin
Senators who were themselves "Stalwarts". In visiting Madison in April of
1903, in the midst of the fight for La Follette's reforms, Roosevelt did
nothing to aid the governor in his endeavors. When La Follette's delegation
to the National Convention of 1904 asked for his help in getting their places
in the convention, he put them off. He did not support them until after the

86 Mowry, 176-177, citing Letter of Theodore Roosevelt to La Follette,
Jan. 3, 1910 and to Jonathan Bourne, Jan. 2, 1910, Roosevelt MSS.
Wisconsin Supreme Court declared them the legal delegates and even then he allowed the "Stalwarts" delegation to be seated in the convention. 87

Roosevelt's first endorsement of La Follette came in September, 1910, after the latter had achieved a sweeping landslide at the polls in the race for the Senatorship of the state. Roosevelt then said that it was the duty of the Wisconsin legislature to return La Follette to the Senate. 88 This was unenthusiastic praise indeed.

In conclusion, La Follette did some of his greatest work in the field of political reform. His Declaration of Principles was taken, almost intact, by the makers of the platform of the Progressive party as the basis of their policy. And as early as 1897, he had evolved a well-thought out program of reform. Roosevelt, on the other hand, was comparatively disinterested in political reform as a formal policy. Since this point was so basic to the progressive movement, his failure to wholeheartedly support it throughout his career is a serious defect. His sudden allegiance to the principles of this reform and his coolness to them after that campaign do not speak well of his sincerity and carry the tinge of political expediency. Certainly, on this point at least, La Follette was by far the more progressive of the two men.

87 Barton, 380-384.
88 Ibid., 384.
CHAPTER IV

THE QUESTION OF EMPLOYEES

In view of the current interest in the rights of the working man, it seems strange that neither Roosevelt nor La Follette took more interest in legislation to relieve the condition of the laborers of their day. It is probable, however, that their attitude was a result of the "laissez-faire" principle which was prevalent in their youth. Both of them expressed their interest in the working man largely through forms of relief other than direct legislation to improve his condition.

The Progressive party platform devoted one of its lengthiest sections to its numerous labor planks. Relative to the use of the court in labor disputes it said that the party was against the issuance of injunctions in cases arising out of labor difficulties when such injunctions would not apply when no labor disputes existed. The platform further advocated legislation for the prevention of industrial accidents, occupational diseases, overwork, and involuntary unemployment. The list of reforms also included the fixing of minimum safety and health standards, the prohibition of child labor and minimum wages for women with all night work forbidden. The platform showed its concern for the more defenseless victims of industrialization further by sponsoring an eight-hour day for women and children. The party felt that one day's rest in seven was essential for all and wanted to see convict contract labor abolished. It approved of compensation for death by industrial accident and for injury and trade diseases and of social
insurance. Finally, it favored the organization of worker to protect their interests and the establishment of a separate Department of Labor in the Cabinet. 1

For Roosevelt's attitude on the question of reform of laboring conditions, we can best begin with his record in his home state of New York. There he first attracted real attention when he was appointed a member of a committee of Assemblymen to investigate the manufacture of cigars in the tenement houses. The Cigar-Makers' Union wanted to prohibit this practice. Roosevelt went into the tenements and saw for himself the abominable conditions that existed. As a result he reported the bill favorably and his was the determining vote of the three man committee. The bill was poorly drawn but passed the legislature and was signed by Cleveland, then governor of New York, at Roosevelt's suggestion. 2

Later the courts of New York declared the bill unconstitutional maintaining that it interfered with the sacredness of the home. Roosevelt was exasperated by the attitude of the court and said of it that "it was this case which first waked me to a dim and partial understanding of the fact that the courts were not necessarily the best judges of what should be done to better social and industrial conditions." 3

Despite Roosevelt's championship of the bill to forbid cigar-making in tenement houses, labor in New York was cool to him. The friendliness and

2 Roosevelt, Autobiography, 88.
3 Ibid., 89.
praise given him when he first supported the bill, changed when he, in
urging Cleveland to sign it, told the governor that he was opposed to most
trade union measures. 4

In addition to the activity mentioned above, Roosevelt's position on
the various labor bills before the Assembly during the time he served in
that body give an indication of his feelings at that period in his public
life. The unions in 1883 were demanding the abolition of prison labor which
could produce more cheaply and whose products were sold on contract to
companies in competition with free labor. This obviously kept the wages of
free working men down. A bill to abolish prison contract labor was intro-
duced into the New York legislature. Roosevelt opposed it and delayed action
on the measure in the Assembly even though the voters of the state had, at
the polls, indicated their approval of the bill. 5 In a speech before the
Assembly explaining his stand, he said that he did "not pretend to have the
interests of the working men at heart." 6 He did not want to abolish the
system of prison labor but he did indicate that he was open to suggestions
relative to its reform. 7 The position that Roosevelt took on this matter
did not meet with the approval of labor even as much as did his position
on the Cigar-Makers' Bill.

A brief summary 8 of the way Roosevelt voted on other labor bills is

4 Hurwitz, 88, citing Cigar Makers Official Journal, March 6, 1883.
5 Ibid., 93, citing New York State Bureau of Labor Statistics First Annual
6 Ibid., 93-94, citing speech before Assembly on Convict Labor Bill,
Roosevelt MSS.
7 Ibid., 94, citing New York Evening Journal, April 18, 1883.
8 Ibid., 95-104.
equally enlightening. In the Assembly, he regularly opposed bills regulating the wages and hours of male workers. In 1882, he voted against an increase in salary for city laborers in New York City, Brooklyn, and Buffalo. That same year, Roosevelt voted "no" to an increase for the policemen and firemen in the same towns. This bill was passed but vetoed. When it was revived the following year, it was passed again and signed by the governor and the following year an additional wage increase was provided. Roosevelt was against all of these bills.

On the question of hours which men could or had to work Roosevelt helped to defeat an attempt to put teeth in the eight-hour day law for state employees. He also opposed the reduction of the street railway workers' hours to twelve. The bill was then amended to make the working day ten hours with overtime for the other two hours but Roosevelt still voted with the opposition. This bill was passed by the Assembly and then vetoed by the governor.

But all of Roosevelt's record was not so dark. Although he opposed respite for men workers as contrary to the principles of free enterprise, he did support measures safeguarding women and children and the health of all workers. He voted for measures to limit the hours of women and to provide factory inspectors to enforce safety provisions. In 1882, we find him voting for a bill that provided safety measures in workshops and factories. The next year, he approved a measure to increase the safety measures necessary and to limit the hours of mechanics to what was considered a healthful number. In 1884, he applied the limited hours bill to building workers. He also agreed to the establishment of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
After leaving the Assembly, Roosevelt felt called upon to defend his seemingly unsympathetic stand on the labor question. In a magazine article, he explained that he felt that people should depend on themselves, not the state. In his opinion the state had already done much to help the working man and labor unjustly accused the "system" of being wrong. This same idea was repeated in his message to the legislature of the state when he was its governor in 1899. This stand is consistent with his great belief in the necessity for man to help himself and in the principle of "laissez faire", still popular at that time. Roosevelt, as a New York Assemblyman, was a far way removed from the Progressive platform of 1912.

As governor of New York Roosevelt's labor record is more consistent with the principles of the progressives. In his inaugural message, he reiterated his new solicitude for organized labor which had been spoken of in the campaign. During the campaign, Roosevelt admitted that he had been rather uncharitable to labor in his past and announced that he had seen the light. Although he was far from a radical reformer as governor, his position was advanced over that of his days in the Assembly.

One of Roosevelt's earliest suggestions to the legislature regarded the law requiring an eight-hour day and a prevailing rate of wages for state employees. This law had been enacted in 1897 and had been poorly

9 Ibid., 105, citing T. Roosevelt, "Phases of State Legislation," Century, XXIX, 826 (April, 1885).
10 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 10.
11 Ibid., 2.
12 Pringle, 206.
Roosevelt suggested to the legislature that "if this law is to remain on the statute books, it should be enforced, and, therefore, the Legislature should make it the particular business of somebody to enforce it." The legislature followed the governor's recommendation and amended the law of 1897. Although Roosevelt's suggestion to the legislature could hardly be said to constitute strong approval of the principle of the eight-hour day for labor, he showed, in signing the bill, that he was not unsympathetic with this idea. Here he said: "It is highly desirable that the principle which this law seeks to establish should be really established and that the nominal purpose of the eight-hour day should be in fact fulfilled."

Later on in his first year as governor, Roosevelt suggested that the legislature establish a Board of Factory Inspectors to enforce labor regulations. This was followed by the law that buildings to be used for manufacturing should be granted a permit after inspection by the Board. This was designed to wipe out the "sweat shop" system of tenement manufacturing. The passage of these laws was among the most notable accomplishments of Roosevelt's first year as governor.

In his annual Message of December, 1899, Roosevelt gave another indication of how far he had traveled from his labor stand as an Assemblyman. In the Assembly, he had voted against limiting the working hours of the

---

13 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 4.
14 Ibid., 94-95.
15 Ibid., 11-12.
16 Ibid., 13.
17 Bishop, I, 124.
employees of the street railways. In 1899, he said: "The law regulating the hours of labor on surface railroads is also an excellent provision against the tendency to work the men to an almost unlimited number of hours." Thus was the Rooseveltian attitude on labor being revised.

In this same message, Roosevelt had included a suggestion that the legislature provide for employer liability. However, Benjamin B. Odell, Jr., the Republican State Chairman, intimated that this was not desirable and Roosevelt removed it. This was an indication of the general tenor of events during the second year of Roosevelt's governorship. He was handicapped in whatever labor legislation that he might have desired to have enacted by the spector of the presidential election of 1900. As governor of New York, he was expected to carry his state for his party and the party leaders, who could also withhold the nomination for governor from him, urged him to a policy of caution so as not to alienate essential sources of support.

As President, Roosevelt's labor policy became more clearly defined. He summed up this attitude himself in a speech in April of 1902 and his statement is worth quoting for it pertains not only to labor but to capital as well.

This is the era of the great combinations both of labor and capital....But they must work under the same law, and the laws concerning them must be just and wise...conceived in the spirit

18 Hurwitz, 95-104.
19 Roosevelt, Public Papers 11.
20 Pringle, 211-212.
21 Ibid., 211.
of those who...recognize the need...of giving the widest scope possible for the free exercise of individual initiative, and yet who recognize also that after combinations have reached a certain stage it is indispensable to the general welfare that the Nation should exercise over them, cautiously and firmly, the power of supervision and regulation. 22

This explains much of his attitude for, at all times, he was a firm believer in orderliness and confirmation to the law.

In studying Roosevelt's record as president, his attitude on the various problems as presented in the Progressive party platform will be, in so far as possible, considered separately. In regard to some of these, such as restricted hours for women and safety measures, he had already indicated his approval as governor of New York. For some of the others, we can look to his years in the White House.

Roosevelt's ideas on at least one of the reforms advocated in the platform of 1912 underwent considerable change during his political lifetime. Long before the formation of the Progressive party, in 1896 to be exact, the Democratic platform contained a plank condemning the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Commenting on this, Roosevelt said that it "contains an attack upon the main dependence of our liberties" and that it was fitting that "with the demand for free silver should go the demand for free riot." 23 But this cannot be said to be Roosevelt's attitude even before he became the Progressive party candidate in 1912.


23 Fringle, 163.
In 1905, the unions started a move to deprive the courts of the right to issue injunctions in labor disputes. In his annual Message of that year, Roosevelt opposed this bill, but he suggested that the procedure in injunction cases might be regulated by requiring the judge to give due notice to the adverse parties before granting the writ. Such a bill was presented to Congress in that year, but it was defeated. 24

Throughout the year 1905, Roosevelt had worked for the protection of labor against the excessive use of the injunction despite the fact that he did not approve of the exact legislation desired by the unions. 25 In 1906, he continued his efforts. In May of that year, he said that he opposed having any "operation of the law turn into an engine of oppression against the wage-worker." In his message to Congress, the president pointed to "grave abuses" which were possible because of the use made of the injunction in the hands of capital. 26 He had his bill of the year before introduced into Congress once again. The unions continued their opposition, but Roosevelt would make no further concessions. The law was not passed, however, even in the limited form that Roosevelt asked. 27

When Congress convened in December of 1907, Roosevelt was still working for a limitation in the use of injunctions. On January 31, 1908, he sent a

---

24 Bishop, II, 15.
25 Pringle, 429.
27 Bishop, II, 16.
special message to Congress that was the most radical of all his messages. In it he scourged the courts for their promptness in using the injunction against labor unions. He disclaimed any intention to abolish the injunction process, which, in the hands of a wise judge, was an essential part of the judicial machinery. On the other hand, he said, "it has sometimes been used heedlessly and unjustly, and...some of the injunctions...inflict grave and occasionally irreparable wrong upon those enjoined." He later sent another message to Congress asking the limitation of the injunction but this was among the suggestions of the president which Congress chose to ignore. Yet Roosevelt certainly tried during his administration to obtain a law that would protect the workers and the union leaders in event of a strike.

Yet it must not be supposed from the above that Roosevelt was a person to condone disregard for the law and for order. Repeatedly in his public utterances, we find the idea that violence was to be deplored. In a Labor Day speech in Syracuse, New York in 1903, he pointed out that "there is no worse enemy of the wage-worker than the man who condones mob violence in any shape or who preaches class hatred." He continued by pointing out that when business was bad all people suffered and there was, therefore, great need for all to work together.

28 Mowry, 28.
29 Tringle, 478.
30 Ibid., 482-483.
31 Bishop, I, 257.
Roosevelt expressed much the same disapproval of violence in connection with labor organizations in the Annual Message to Congress in December of 1904. This section of the message is worth repeating.

Wage-workers have an entire right to organize and by all peaceful means to endeavor to persuade their fellows to join their organizations. They have under no circumstances the right to commit violence upon those, whether capitalists or wage-earners, who refuse to support their organization, or who side with those with whom they are at odds, for mob rule is intolerable at any time. 32

Roosevelt was strongly in favor of the creation of a Cabinet post to look after the interest of the laboring class and to protect and foster his anti-trust program. For this purpose, in his first message to Congress after McKinley's death, he suggested the creation of a Department of Commerce and Labor with power to investigate corporate earnings and to guard the rights of the workingman. 33 Congress followed his suggestion and created the Department in February of 1903. The Department included a Bureau of Corporations which was to devote itself especially to the trust question. 34 Roosevelt was pleased with the action of Congress and felt that this was one of the outstanding achievements of his first term in office. 35

Another important part of the Progressive party platform concerned

32 Ibid., II, 426.
33 Pringle, 245-246.
34 Ibid., 341, also Rhodes, 296-297.
itself with the demand for workmen's compensation or employers' liability legislation. Roosevelt took up this problem early. We have seen that he was interested in it as governor of New York and he did not forget his interest as president. In his message of December, 1904, he suggested the possibility of workmen's compensation to Congress. 36 He continued to keep the idea in mind and in 1905, Roosevelt promoted the idea of employers' liability legislation for the District of Columbia. 37 Finally, the president's efforts bore fruit and on June 11, 1906, Congress passed the Employers Liability act. 38

The difficulties were not over, however. The Supreme Court declared the Employers' Liability act unconstitutional on January 6, 1908 because it was not made to apply only to injuries incurred in interstate commerce. 39 When Roosevelt sent his message to Congress in January of 1908, he called the attention of Congress to the action of the court and suggested another law that would meet the Constitutional requirements. He asked that it be made to apply to carriers in interstate commerce only. He also called for workmen's compensation for all government employees, and expressed the hope that the "same broad principle" would be applied to all private employers. 40 This was followed by a special message on the subject 41 and finally, on April 22, 1908, Congress enacted a law drawn up to Roosevelt's specifications.

36 Pringle, 360.
37 Ibid., 430.
38 Rhodes, 337.
39 Ibid., 337.
40 Pringle, 478.
41 Ibid., 482.
This law was upheld by the Supreme Court on January 15, 1912. 42 As he was preparing to leave office, Roosevelt summed up his achievements by saying that, although Congress did not give him everything that he wanted, he had obtained a good Employers' Liability act and he was justly proud of the fact. 43

When discussing workmen's compensation in his message of 1904, Roosevelt also suggested the need for eliminating child labor abuses. Any such suggestion was greatly opposed by the manufacturers. 44 Again in 1905, Roosevelt suggested an investigation of conditions relative to child labor. 45 It was not until 1908, however, that any law regulating child labor was enacted, and then it applied only to the District of Columbia. 46

One of the best known labor incidents during the Roosevelt administration was the coal strike which began on May 15, 1902. 47 The strike dragged on through the summer with the owners refusing to arbitrate. With winter approaching and the nation threatened with a serious coal shortage, the president decided to take action. On October 3, Roosevelt invited Mitchell, president of the union, and the operators, chief of whom was George F. Baer, to a conference in Washington. The operators again refused to have an arbitration board appointed. Mitchell then turned down Roosevelt's suggestion that the miners return to work while a commission reviewed the

42 Rhodes, 337.
44 Pringle, 360.
45 Ibid., 360.
47 Rhodes, 236.
facts in the dispute. The president then threatened to have the mines taken over and run by the army. This brought the owners into line and they agreed to arbitrate. The miners went back to work and a commission was appointed. The event was significant because it was the first time in American history that the federal government had officially acknowledged that "at times justice might lay with labor in its disputes with capital." Roosevelt was just as ready to use the army against labor when it threatened violence as against capital when it refused to cooperate. The summer that the coal strike was in progress, there was also a general strike of labor unions in Chicago. On a tour of the Middle West, Roosevelt stopped at that city. A delegation of the strikers called on him and urged his support. His answer is an excellent summary of his feelings relative to organized labor. He said: "I am a believer in unions....But the union must obey the law just as the corporation must obey the law." And he threatened to use the army against the unions if necessary to maintain order.

There is one other incident that should be cited. It illustrates Roosevelt's interest in seeing that labor received some degree of justice. In February, 1908, the Louisville and Nashville Railway company announced its intention of reducing wages because of "drastic laws inimical to the interests of the railroads." Other companies made similar announcements.

48 Ibid., 239-246.
49 Mowry, 18-19.
50 Bishop, I, 440.
On February 18, the president sent an open letter to the Interstate Commerce Commission ordering an investigation to determine the real cause of the reduction. This threat was sufficient to make the railroad change its mind. 51

Many of the reforms which Roosevelt suggested, in other fields as well as in the field of labor, were not enacted by Congress. This is especially true of the latter part of his administration when the forceful language he used in making suggestions to Congress alienated that body. Yet the very recklessness of his course "advanced the day when the reforms were adopted. They made these heresies (the reforms which he promoted) familiar. They were still heresies, however, when he left the White House." 52 This seems to sum up Roosevelt's position on labor. He made a great deal of fuss about those particular measures which he wanted and thus made the nation conscious of the problem. Even in his demands he did not ask as much as did the Progressive party platform but he did help people to appreciate the problems of labor.

La Follette came from a predominantly agricultural state and so he would not be expected to be as aware of labor problems nor as interested in labor reform as Roosevelt, coming as he did from industrial New York. It is true that he devoted the greater part of his efforts to reforming political conditions and to controlling the trusts, especially the railroads. Yet, in view of his background, La Follette showed a surprising interest in the problems facing the working man.

51 Ibid., II, 81-82.
52 Pringle, 485.
One of La Follette's earliest recommendations relative to the relief of workers came in his message to the legislature of his state on January 15, 1903. At that time he suggested for their attention the "question of more efficient protection to employees of railroad companies" recommending "compensation for injuries which he (the employee) may receive through no fault of his own,...(and) provision for the support and maintenance of wife, children, or other dependents, if his life be destroyed in the performance of his duty." Later that same year, at his Labor Day address at Beloit, La Follette discussed the trust question. In the course of his speech, he pointed out that during the previous six years the wages of factory workers in Wisconsin had increased, on the whole, only about ten per cent, while the cost of living had increased about twenty-seven per cent during the same period. This was practically the first public mention of the "high-cost-of-living" note later to be so familiar. It showed that even at this early date, La Follette was not entirely uninterested in bettering the conditions of the working man.

The legislature of 1903 did not take La Follette's suggestions but in 1905, with political reform and railroad regulation completed, the legislature took up some of the other reforms which La Follette thought necessary. Included in these reforms, introduced by La Follette while governor of Wisconsin, were workingmen's compensation and the creation of an industrial

54 Barton, 279.
commission which had the power to "control and regulate the most difficult questions of sanitation, safety, health and moral well-being which affect the workers of the state." 55 These early measures in a state that was essentially agricultural show a surprising resemblance to the Progressive party platform of 1912.

After the legislative session of 1905 in Wisconsin, La Follette moved his area of action to the United States Senate. There most of his time was spent opposing measures which he felt were contrary to his principles. But he was not without his positive suggestions. It was La Follette who introduced the Employer Liability act in 1906, a bill which was considered as a glory to the Roosevelt administration. 56 When this bill was declared unconstitutional, La Follette introduced a similar bill eliminating the unconstitutional features in the Senate in 1907. 57 It was this bill which passed and withstood examination by the Supreme Court and which Roosevelt supporters made much of in discussing his labor record. This bill alone is excellent testimony to La Follette's concern for labor.

In addition to his efforts on behalf of the Employers' Liability act, La Follette's record in the Senate had other things to commend it. He was instrumental in securing the passage of legislation establishing the doctrine of comparative negligence in railway employment; and he brought about a bill

55 La Follette, 311.  
56 Torrelle, 138.  
57 Ibid., 139.
that forbade more than sixteen consecutive hours on duty for railway employ-
ees. La Follette, himself, thought that sixteen hours were a long time but
many of the workers felt that any further restriction would limit their
earning power too much. 58 In 1910, he again came to the defense of labor
and gave good indication of his feelings relative to labor unions. In a
speech before the Senate, La Follette urged that the provisions of the
Sherman Anti-Trust law not be made applicable to the labor unions. He felt
that the courts were unnecessarily harsh in the application of the law in
relation to the unions and, furthermore, that the law was never intended to
refer to organizations of workingmen. 59

Although La Follette's record as a labor reformer is not as extensive
as Roosevelt's, it is equally as commendable. In fact, there is no evidence
that he was ever inimical to labor and, although he did not talk as much
about the topic, his ideas on the subject all resulted in substantial gain
for the working man. We have seen that the very bill which Roosevelt counted
as an outstanding achievement of his administration was a product of
La Follette's efforts.

In concluding this chapter on employees, it is enlightening to consider
a particular set of employees—those working for the government. The ex-
tension of civil service was a most important question during the period
we are considering. The Progressive party platform took note of it. The
platform expressed its approval of civil service and urged its strengthening.

58 Ibid., 139.
59 Ibid., 130-131.
The platform said that civil service law should be enforced in spirit as well as in letter. It wanted postmasters, collectors, marshalls and all other nonpolitical officers added to the classified lists. It favored continuous service during good behavior and efficiency and an equitable retirement law. 60

Any discussion of civil service reform revolves around Theodore Roosevelt. An authority on the subject who was a great admirer of his called him, "both as Commissioner and afterwards as President, the leading protagonist in the struggle for the overthrow of the spoils system." 61

Another authority claims that, though Roosevelt worked hard as civil service commissioner, as governor of New York and later as president he did not try as strenuously to "wreck the organization" by drying up the sources of power as he might have done. He feels that then Roosevelt viewed the spoils system with an air of amused tolerance." 62 Whatever view one takes, Roosevelt's promotion of civil service did much to further the cause of that reform.

Roosevelt's interest in civil service showed itself early in his career. He made a few speeches on the topic to the Twenty-first District Republican Club when he first joined that organization and its members did not appreciate them. 63 When he was elected to the New York Assembly,

60 Payne, 319-320, from the Progressive Party Platform.
61 William Dudley Foulke, Roosevelt and the Spoilsman, National Civil Service Reform League, New York, 1925, 5.
62 Gosnell, 219.
63 Pringle, 59.
he continued to work for civil service. In 1883, he got a bill before the Assembly that made civil service mandatory for the state and permissable in all cities therein of more than 50,000 population. This bill was passed. The following year, he supported a bill making civil service imperative in cities of more than 20,000 population and to service in police, fire, and other departments. "It was largely through his efforts that these reforms were enacted." 64

As governor of New York, Roosevelt signed the Civil Service Rules on June 3, 1899. 65 These reestablished civil service in the state after it had been suspended by the "Black Act" which had repealed the original law of 1883. 66 After this law was passed, Roosevelt supplanted the "starchless rules" by a set more rigid than had yet been established in any state. 67 This was consistent with his expressed idea on civil service. Of this reform, he said:

Civil-service reform is not merely a movement to better 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 community. 68

Outside the state of New York, Roosevelt was no less active in working for civil service reform. He was appointed Civil Service Commissioner in 1889 and served for six years. 69 As commissioner, he did some fine work and made some excellent improvements in the service. He insisted that the

64 Foulke, 8.
65 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 137-182.
66 Foulke, 49.
67 Gosnell, 217.
68 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 100.
69 Ibid., 100.
list of persons eligible for examination be made public and ordered each such list posted openly in post offices and custom houses. He also insisted that the questions asked in the various exams be of a practical nature. 70 During his term as commissioner, the classified service was greatly extended. By 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 was under the protection of the law was more than doubled. More than 50,000 government workers were added to the civil service classification. 71 Of this Roosevelt said: "Our aim was always to procure the extension of the classified service as rapidly as possible, and to see that the law was administered thoroughly and fairly." 72

A few examples will serve to illustrate Roosevelt's continued concern over civil service while he was president. At the beginning of his first term, he repealed an order exempting from examination a great number of employees of various departments and added to the classified list all superintendents of Indian Schools acting as agents and the rural delivery service. 73 During Roosevelt's second administration, the local civil service boards were consolidated into districts with an experienced man in charge of each. Before he left office, thirteen such offices had been established. 74

---

70 Foulke, 26.
71 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 116.
72 Ibid., 100.
73 Foulke, 54.
Foulke criticizes Roosevelt's changed stand on two questions relative to civil service reform. The reformers did not agree with his second position. In the matter of promotions, Roosevelt first felt that they should be by written examination but later changed his mind, probably due to his experiences as Police Commissioner in New York City. Regarding removals, the law as interpreted during McKinley's administration required reasons for dismissal, notice, and opportunity to answer. Roosevelt concurred. As president, however, he made summary removal the procedure if an offense was committed in his presence or that of the head of a Department. In other cases, there was to be no hearing although the cause of removal had to be stated in writing. Taft later reestablished McKinley's plan. Despite this criticism, Foulke did feel that "he (Roosevelt) was the only president who from the beginning to the end of his career uniformly supported Civil Service." His record on this reform certainly met the requirements of the Progressive party platform.

La Follette also indicated an early interest in civil service. One of the things advocated by his newspaper, The State, in 1897, was a state civil service law. This was later enacted by the state but there is no evidence to suppose that La Follette ever had Roosevelt's interest in the subject. He seems to have been a follower on this topic rather than a leader.

74 Ibid., 100.
75 Ibid., 102-105.
76 Ibid., 81.
77 La Follette, 209.
A summary of the positions of the two men on labor reform seems to show, as previously suggested in this chapter, that Roosevelt attracted much more attention but actually did no more than La Follette. In fact, the latter had a more consistently favorable attitude toward the working man. He did not have the natural sympathy with labor, coming as he did from an agricultural state, but he did develop a generous attitude. Roosevelt was inclined to speak and act in generalities while La Follette's work was more specific. He was certainly as much, if not more, in sympathy with the program laid down by the Progressive party platform in 1912.
CHAPTER V

THE FIGHT ON THE TRUSTS

The terms "trust-busting" and Roosevelt are so closely allied as to
be almost synonymous. Certainly, as in the case of labor reform, he did
much to make the public conscious of the need of some type of regulation
of the great companies that were dominating American life during the latter
part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries.
But it is our purpose here to determine to what extent each merited the
sobriquet of "trust-buster."

The Progressive party platform expressed the sentiments of progressives
everywhere when it said:

We demand that the test of true prosperity shall be the benefits
conferred thereby on all the citizens, not confined to individuals
or classes, and that the test of corporate efficiency shall be
the ability better to serve the public; that those who profit
by control of business affairs shall justify that profit and
that control by sharing with the public the fruits thereof. 1

It suggested enforcement of these ideas by the strong national regulation
of inter-state corporations, the establishment of a Federal administration
commission to supervise industrial corporations engaged in inter-state
commerce, and the strengthening of the Sherman Anti-Trust law. It wanted
to give the Inter-State Commerce Commission the power to value the physical
property of the railroads as a basis for rate-fixing. 2 The program was

1 Payne, 310-312, from the Progressive Party Platform.
2 Ibid., 310-312.
not more inclusive because so much had already been done. It is our concern
to discover the part played by Roosevelt and La Follette in this doing.

One of the earliest forms of trust regulation was the attempt to
force the companies to pay their just portion of the taxes of the various
states. We find that Roosevelt was working toward this end very early in
his career. As an Assemblyman, he and a fellow-legislator, Mike Costello,
led the fight to prevent the return of over one-half of the taxes collected
by the state from the elevated company of New York. The company was attempt-
ing to push such a bill through the Assembly. Roosevelt did not succeed
in stopping the passing of the bill but he did attract so much publicity to
it that the governor vetoed the measure. 3

In one of his earliest proclamations to the legislature of New York
as its governor, Roosevelt returned to the problem of taxation of business.
In his message relating to Tax Laws on March 27, 1899, he said:

It remains true that a corporation which derives its powers
from the State, should pay to the State a just percentage of its
earnings as a return for the privileges it enjoys. This should
be especially true for the franchises bestowed upon gas companies,
street railroads and the like....One thing is certain, that the
franchises should in some form yield a monied return to the
government. 4

Later on, in May of 1899, he further stated that the taxation of franchises
was a right of the state and recommended a law which would tax them as
realty and which would provide for the assessment of the tax by the Board

3 Roosevelt, Autobiography, 80-81.
4 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 55-56.
Roosevelt's insistence on franchise taxation forced the Assembly to consider the matter despite the opposition of Platt and the regular Republican organization. After the law was passed, Roosevelt indicated his intention of seeing that it was enforced. Platt asked the governor to sign a bill on behalf of the New York Central Railroad exempting grade crossings of steam railroads from the provisions of the bill. Roosevelt thought that this was contrary to the spirit of the bill and replied to Platt that his message had come too late as he (Roosevelt) had already issued a statement saying that the tax commissioners were opposed to the proposed measure. Roosevelt made it very clear, however, that his actions as governor were not directed at the destruction of industry. He said that "we do not wish to discourage enterprise. We do not desire to destroy corporations; we do desire to put them fully at the service of the State and the people." When Roosevelt was catapulted into the presidency by McKinley's assassination, the world of Wall Street shuddered. It took repeated assurances by the leading conservative Republicans that there would be no change in policy under Roosevelt to prevent a serious panic in the stock market.

6 Gosnell, 198-199.
7 Ibid., 273.
8 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 19.
9 Pringle, 237-238.
Roosevelt did go slowly when he first came to the White House out of deference to party harmony, but he was not one to long remain quiet. He watched the ever-increasing power and self-assurance of the industrialists and felt a corresponding reduction in the power of the government. He determined to challenge the "tyranny of plutocracy" that he believed was being established. The point of attack chosen was the Northern Securities Company, a holding company recently organized by the Morgan interests acting for Hill, Harriman, and other of the railroad magnates.

On February 19, 1902, Attorney-General Knox announced that the government would shortly demand the dissolution of the Northern Securities Company. The news came as a great shock to the industrialists despite the fact that, on January 7, the attorney-general of Minnesota had filed suit against the company under a Minnesota statute that forbade the consolidation of competing railroads. The Federal government's suit was filed in St. Paul on March 10. The litigation had much greater significance than the breaking up of a holding company. It was the first time since its passage that the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was to be sincerely and energetically enforced. It gave new heart to the reform elements.

While the Northern Securities case was still pending, Roosevelt went on a speaking tour of the northeastern states. There in the stronghold of industry, he again stressed the need for the regulation of the trusts.

11 Mowry, 18.
12 Pringle, 257.
13 Ibid., 257.
14 Mowry, 18.
Providence, Rhode Island, he reiterated his belief that "the nation must assume this power of control by legislation; if necessary by constitutional amendment. The immediate necessity in dealing with trusts is to place them under the real, not nominal control of some sovereign to which, as its creatures, the trusts shall owe allegiance, and in whose courts the sovereign's orders may be enforced." 15 In this same address, however, he gave evidence of the conciliatory spirit that so often softened his blows directed at corporations. He brought out that a difference existed between the good and the bad companies, urged that legislation against business not be too stringent, and suggested that the power of the government should be exercised with "wisdom and restraint." 16

On March 14, 1904, the Supreme Court dissolved the Northern Securities Company by a vote of 5-4. 17 Logically, the government should then have started proceedings against its founders as law-breakers. But neither Roosevelt, nor anyone else, desired this. The suit had served its purpose; the government now had, nominally, the power to deal with the corporations dangerous to the public good. Moreover, Pringle suggested, the campaign of 1904 was approaching and Roosevelt had no desire to further antagonize the financial support of the Republican party. 18

The establishment of the Department of Commerce and Labor has been mentioned in a previous chapter of this paper, but it is necessary to review

15 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 36.
16 Ibid., 37.
17 Rhodes, 224.
18 Pringle, 263.
this again. Roosevelt insisted that the Department include a Bureau of Corporations with the power to "investigate the operations and conduct of interstate corporations." 19 Business opposed this and Congress was dubious. The president, however, enlisted public support on his side and, as mentioned previously, the Bureau of Corporations was in the Department of Commerce and Labor when it was founded. Roosevelt felt that this was "one of the most important accomplishments of my administration." 20 But after the passage of the bill, Roosevelt controlled the investigations of the Bureau, and any desire he might have had to further prosecute the fight against the trusts, until after the election of 1904.

The election had hardly been favorably concluded when the specter of corporation control stirred again in Washington. Just a few days before the close of 1904, James A. Garfield, Commissioner of Corporations, issued a report recommending that Congress pass legislation to bring all corporations engaged in inter-state trade under Federal supervision. Business was properly shocked by this sudden indication of the administration "to bite the hand that fed it." 21 It was even more apprehensive when Roosevelt gave his speech to the Union League Club of Philadelphia a month later. Here he brought out the necessity of increased government supervision of business to meet the increased development of industry. He said that a constitutional amendment would have to be passed if the courts refused to uphold Federal

20 Bishop, II, 330.
regulation of corporations. He made special mention of the need to control the railroads. 22

Nothing of a spectacular nature was accomplished with the outgoing Congress, however, and action had to wait for the new Congress to meet. Also Roosevelt became so engrossed in problems of an international nature that reform was, for a time, crowded out of the limelight. When he came back to the fray it was to concentrate on railroad legislation.

The Elkins Act had been passed on February 19, 1903. It forbade the granting of rebates to favored shippers and is counted one of the achievements of Roosevelt's first administration by his supporters. 23 Actually, it was framed with the help of the operators themselves and they supported it. 24 No serious effort seems to have been made to enforce this bill, however; the rebates went on despite the unhappiness of the railroads over the situation. They were tired of the demands made upon them by the large shippers and saw more profit for themselves if rebates were abolished. 25 But enforcement of the Elkins Act was not the answer to the need for regulation of the railroads. It did not begin to strike at the real problem.

The magnitude of the problem in regard to the railroads becomes obvious when we examine some of the statements made by the controllers of the roads. So great was their power that in 1906 E. H. Harriman, railroad czar of the

23 Rhodes, 296.
24 Pringle, 340.
25 Ibid., 417.
United States, could say: "Whenever I want legislation from a state legislature, I can buy it. I can buy Congress and...the judiciary." Certainly this is sufficient to make the need for some curtailment of the power of the railroads obvious.

In his message of December, 1904, Roosevelt urged that the Inter-State Commerce Commission be given the authority to change the rates charged by railroads on the complaint of the shipper. This change was to be made if the rate charged was found unreasonable after a full hearing of the facts and it was to be subject to judicial review. Roosevelt did not go so far as to suggest that the Commission be given the power to fix rates and, in fact, termed this as "undesirable." This was the opening move in the fight that was to eventually bring the Hepburn bill onto the statute books.

In accordance with the president's suggestion, the Esch-Townsend bill was introduced into the House of Representatives early in 1905. This embodied the president's demands for rate-making. This was a "Lame-Duck" Congress, however, and the Senate was not as responsive to the president's demands. There the bill never got out of the Committee on Interstate Commerce. Roosevelt, never one to give up when there was a prospect of a fight, talked constantly of regulation throughout the following year. When Congress met in 1905, the opposing camps were ready for battle.

26 Rhodes, 332, citing Review of Reviews, ed., 857.
27 Ibid., 323.
29 Bishop, I, 428.
30 Pringle, 418.
The message which Roosevelt sent to Congress when it met in 1905 reaffirmed his demands for a railroad regulation bill. This time, however, he went further than he had done in 1904. Although he did not ask that the Interstate Commerce Commission be given the right to establish rates, he did suggest that that body be given the power to prevent the "imposition of unjust or unreasonable rates." He also requested that all of the accounts of the railroads be open to the public. 31 When the bill was introduced into the House by Representative Peter Hepburn of Iowa, the man who gave his name to the measure, it was more radical than the president had suggested in the power it gave to the commission. 32 The House passed this bill on February 8, 1906 by a vote of 346 to 7 with 3 answering merely "present" and 29 not voting. 33

It was not as simple to obtain Senate approval of the Hepburn bill. Roosevelt, himself, was not entirely confident of its passage. He realized, too, the source of the opposition. Concerning this, he wrote to Kermit:

In trying to pass the rate bill I have come straight against the most powerful corporate interests in the country, which are represented in the Senate by men like Aldrich, Foraker, and the rest. I think I shall get the rate Bill through, but it is a hard and doubtful fight, and they are making every effort to have some seemingly innocent amendment put in which shall destroy something of what I am endeavoring to accomplish. 34

Among the amendments suggested to the bill was one introduced by ex-Attorney-General Knox, at that time Senator from Pennsylvania, calling for general

32 Rhodes, 323.
33 Ibid., 324.
34 Letter of March 4, 1906, Roosevelt, Letters to Kermit, 130.
court review of the decisions of the commission in rate cases. 35 So desperate did the fight become that Roosevelt turned away from the Republican leaders and enlisted "the aid of some fifteen or twenty Republicans added to most of the Democrats." 36 The combination finally won out and the bill passed the Senate, but with the amendment giving the courts the right to review the commissions' rates, on May 18, 1906 by a vote of 71 to 3 with 15 not voting. 37

Roosevelt was jubilant over the victory and he was confident that final passage would be secured. He expressed these sentiments as well as saying that "this has been my chief fight of the session" in a letter to his son. 38 Roosevelt was right in his prediction. A conference of the House and Senate met and their recommendations were accepted by both houses. 39 The bill as finally passed gave the Interstate Commerce Commission jurisdiction over pipe lines, express and Pullman operations, refrigeration, storage, and all other aspects covered by the general term, transportation. The rate-making powers of the commission had been strengthened and the accounts of public carriers were open for examination. 40 The bill was approved by the president on June 29, 1906 and became a law. 41

The Hepburn bill, as finally passed, was really a compromise between the progressive and the conservative members of the Republican party.

36 Letter of April 1, 1906, Roosevelt, Letters to Kermit, 135.
37 Rhodes, 325.
38 Letter of May 20, 1906, Roosevelt, Letters to Kermit, 143.
39 Rhodes, 325.
40 Pringle, 425.
41 Rhodes, 325.
Roosevelt was much pleased by this for he felt that it would help heal the widening breach in the party. \footnote{42} He had been anxious for the bill to pass in the first place because he felt that it would help to prevent the more radical step of government ownership of the roads. \footnote{43} At the time the bill was passed, he had opposed La Follette's suggestion that fair rates could not be determined upon unless the property of the carriers had first been evaluated. In this, as in most other measures, Roosevelt's progressivism was tempered by considerations of expediency. It was not until his message to Congress in December of 1908 that he supported the idea of physical evaluation of the railroads. \footnote{44} But then he was about to leave the White House and he had passed the zenith of his influence.

In addition to the work done on rate-making, the Roosevelt administration was active in other spheres. In December, 1905, the president recommended a Pure Food law \footnote{45} and followed that on June 4, 1906 with a special message to Congress urging the passage of a law giving the Federal government the right to inspect all stock yards and packing houses and their products that entered into interstate commerce. \footnote{46} These suggestions were largely the result of the exposures made by the muck-rakers.

There is one incident concerning Roosevelt's relations with the trusts that occurred during the panic of 1907 and that bears telling. At that time

\footnotesize{
\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{42} Mowry, 26.
\item \footnote{43} Bishop, I, 428.
\item \footnote{44} Mowry, 26.
\item \footnote{45} Pringle, 429.
\item \footnote{46} Rhodes, 334.
\end{itemize}
}
the United States Steel Corporation, a Morgan interest, bought up the stock of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, thus strengthening its hold on the steel industry. This stock had been used as collateral for loans which the company made from various New York banks. The Panic of 1907 had driven the stock so low that it no longer covered the loans, and the banks were going to sell it. The representatives of United States Steel, Henry C. Frick and Elbert H. Gary, told Roosevelt that their company would buy the stock and thus prevent the further panic that would be caused by having it dumped on the market. But U. S. Steel hesitated to take the step because it feared prosecution as a monopoly. Roosevelt told Frick and Gary that, while he couldn't advise the purchase, he did not feel duty bound to object. With this assurance, U. S. Steel bought the stock at the very low panic prices. 47

Roosevelt had obviously been duped by the steel company. In 1911, Taft's administration started proceedings against the combine. Roosevelt took this as a personal affront and was furious. It did not increase his sympathy with his successor. He answered the implied criticism with an editorial in the Outlook in which he gave voice to a theory of industrial regulation and control of trusts which he had developed. He criticized Taft's efforts to restore competition by "destruction of the trusts" and advocated instead a thorough regulation by a government body similar to the Interstate Commerce Commission. He even wanted to go so far as to set prices on commodities manufactured by monopolies. 48 Yet, despite these

47 Mowry, 189.
48 Ibid., 191-192, citing Roosevelt, "The Trusts, the People, and the Square Deal," Outlook, 649-656 (November 18, 1911).
seemingly restrictive suggestions, the article was favorably received by
the business men of the time. Such confirmed believers in corporations as
Andrew Carnegie, Gary, Grenville M. Dodge, and Frank A. Vanderlip publicly
commended the article. It is just possible that they felt that Roosevelt's talk hurt less than Taft's action.

Roosevelt's stand on the entire question of trust regulation was well
summed up by himself. He always, in his public statements, stressed the
fact that trusts were necessary to modern civilization, and that there were
good trusts and bad trusts. The good ones were of great benefit to the
people and their owners were true heroes who should be commended for their
efforts and who should reap their just rewards in monetary returns for
their endeavors. He felt that the good trusts should be protected from the
radicals who would destroy them. This idea was constantly repeated
throughout Roosevelt's career and undoubtedly influenced him greatly. It
might well account for the fact that the "trust-buster" actually only
started twenty-five proceedings leading to indictment under the Sherman
Act while the "reactionary" Taft began forty-five. It was probably at the
root of the fact that it was not until the Taft administration that the
Standard Oil Company and the American Tobacco Company were ordered to
dissolve. With Roosevelt, as was implied earlier, it was not what he
did that earned him his reputation, but what he said.

49 Ibid., 192.
50 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 52-53, 82, 151.
51 Pringle, 427.
Another topic closely allied with the trusts was the tariff. The Progressive party platform used the usual ambiguous language in establishing its stand on this. It did believe in a protective tariff but one "which shall equalize conditions in competition between the United States and foreign countries both for the farmer and the manufacturer, and which shall maintain for labor an adequate standard of living." It went on to "demand downward tariff revision of those duties shown to be excessive", and the establishment of a tariff commission. It condemned the Payne-Aldrich Tariff and demanded immediate repeal of the Canadian Reciprocity Act. 52

With such an innocuous platform, there is little opportunity to be out of step. Yet Roosevelt managed it as well as anyone could. As late as September, 1910, he was very sparing in his criticism of the Payne-Aldrich Tariff. He was then engaged in trying to return the Republicans to Congress and he wrote that, though the tariff was imperfect, it was "better than the last and considerable better than the one before the last." 53 Moreover, it seems fair to presume that the Progressives were advocating some reduction in the tariff. But Roosevelt did nothing about such downward revision while he was first in office. He did talk about improving the tariff and made a few moves in that direction but quit when Cannon told him that it was politically inexpedient. He later admitted that this was sound advice. 54 Later in his second administration, realizing

52 Payne, 316-317, from the Progressive Party Platform.
53 Pringle, 540, citing Outlook, September 17, 1910.
54 Mowry, 45, citing Letter of Roosevelt to Jacob Riis, April 18, 1906, and to Joseph Cannon, February 28, 1907, Roosevelt MSS.
that he was soon to leave office, he decided that the party could not risk another campaign without promising downward revision. He promised but did nothing more. 55 So, despite the reciprocal trade agreement which he sponsored between the United States and Cuba in 1903, 56 it would not seem that Roosevelt was in sympathy with the Progressive party plank on the tariff.

La Follette had no such glamorous title as Roosevelt, but he did much to limit the power of the corporations, especially in his own state of Wisconsin. He directed his efforts against the greatest offenders in the state—the railroads.

La Follette adopted his attitude of fearlessly trying to control the activities of the railroads early in his career. While in the House of Representatives, he withstood the efforts of the railroad lobbyists to obtain his approval of the measures they sponsored even when they threatened to use their influence to defeat him in the next election. 57 When he returned to the political wars in Wisconsin, he made his position clear from the first. In the program of action printed in The State, it was expressly stated that he desired equal taxation for all the property of each individual and every corporation transacting business in the state, and that he wanted the state to prohibit the acceptance by public officials of railroad passes, sleeping car passes, express, telephone and telegraph franks—the ingenious means used by the corporations to gain a hold over the legislators. 58

55 Ibid., 45.
56 Rhodes, 183.
57 Haugen, 94.
La Follette continued his agitation especially against the two evils which he thought most needed correcting. In announcing his candidacy in 1898, he spoke strongly against free passes and franks and against tax-free corporations. The influence of La Follette forced the regular Republicans to incorporate some of the ideas which he advocated in their platform. That instrument included planks against the pass evil and for a more equal taxation. Later in that same 1898, the Republican Club of Milwaukee County contacted La Follette and obtained a summary of the principles which he was sponsoring. Included in these were two which are pertinent. One advocated the prohibition of the acceptance of railroad and sleeping car passes, and express, telegraph, and telephone franks by public officials. The other urged the enactment and enforcement of laws prohibiting trusts and combinations that destroyed competition and restrained trade.

When La Follette was elected governor, he was pledged to a reformation of the method of taxing the railroads. Though this was not an original idea with him—Assemblyman A. R. Hall had been advocating it for many years as a member of the legislature—he deserves much credit for the subsequent enactment of laws enforcing this reform.

Before reviewing La Follette's work with the Wisconsin legislature relative to tax reform, it would be well to see what progress had been made in that direction previous to his administration. In 1897, a committee

59 Barton, 110-111.
60 Ibid., 135.
61 Ibid., 120.
62 Haugen, 126.
was appointed by the legislature to study the problem of taxation. In the
next session of the legislature, in 1899, the committee returned its report,
announcing that the assessments of property were inadequate and that there
was gross undervaluation. It also suggested that a permanent commission
be appointed to supervise all tax matters, study the question, and make
recommendations. 63 The legislature then passed the "Whitehead Bills"
providing for the taxation, under the ad valorem assessment system, of
express, sleeping car, freight line, and equipment companies. 64 Although
these laws preceded the administration of La Follette, they were largely
due to his influence on the Republican platform the previous year. It was
his influence, too, that brought about the anti-pass legislation that was
passed at the end of the 1899 session. 65

As was to be expected, La Follette's message to the legislature in
1901 contained reference to the problem of railroad taxation. In it, he
accused the corporation lobbyists of preventing the equitable taxation of
the railroads and he proposed a permanent commission to supervise and
enforce the tax laws. He also asked more stringent anti-trust laws, declar-
ing that the legislature had the right to prevent monopoly by annulling
charters or by otherwise severely punishing conspiracies to monopolize. 66
In addition, he suggested that the legislature impress upon the temporary
tax committee the duty that it had "to enforce the provisions of the

63 Ibid., 128.
64 Philipp, 129.
65 Barton, 138.
66 Lovejoy, 56, citing Journal of Assembly (1901), "Governor's Message",
 Thursday, January 10, 1901, 16-48.
(Whitehead) law, that all property be placed on the assessment roll at the actual cash value." 67

On January 31, 1901, two railroad bills were introduced into the Wisconsin legislature; one in the Assembly by Hall, the other in the Senate by Whitehead. Hall's bill provided for an increase in the railroad license fee from four to five and one half per cent. Whitehead's measure required that the railroad taxes be based on the ad valorem value of the roads.

On April 10, the license fee bill was reported out of committee with the recommendation that the bill be postponed until April 23. This bill was subsequently defeated in the Assembly. On May 2, the Assembly killed the ad valorem bill as well. The Senate also defeated both measures. 68 On May 2, La Follette gave vent to his feelings regarding the action of his legislature. In vetoing a dog license law that had been passed, he took occasion to upbraid the legislature for further taxing the people while being unwilling to tax the railroads. 69 But the session was not entirely without results. The legislatures did make the tax commission, set up in 1899 as a temporary body, a permanent institution. 70

La Follette wasted no time in taking his fight to the people. He believed that platforms were pledges to the people and that they should be lived up to and he showed where he had been prevented from doing this. 71

67 Haugen, 130.
68 Barton, 175-178.
69 Ibid., 178.
70 Lovejoy, 67.
71 Howe, 16.
In the opening speech of his 1902 campaign, he attacked the menace of the public service corporation and the trusts. He continued his attack and it bore results. He was re-elected and had another opportunity to put his theories into practice.

La Follette's message to the legislature in 1903 laid great stress once again on the problem of railroad taxation. In the section on taxation, he asked for an ad valorem tax on the railroads and the public service corporations. He maintained that "equal and just taxation is a fundamental principle of republican government." The most striking feature of the message, however, was the demand for a permanent commission to fix and regulate railroad rates. He showed by tables where Wisconsin citizens paid 28 to 40 per cent more in freight rates for the same service than the people in Iowa and Illinois where there were regulatory commissions. In addition to his regular message, La Follette sent three special messages to this 1903 legislature on the railroad issues. This pressure finally brought results.

Although unwillingly, the legislature of 1903 did pass an ad valorem railroad tax. On February 13, 1903, an ad valorem tax bill was introduced in both houses. The two were similar except that the Assembly measure provided that the tax go into effect in 1903 and did not exempt railroad bonds.

---

72 Lovejoy, 71.
73 Ibid., 76, citing Journal of Senate (1903), 20-84.
74 Barton, 242.
75 Lovejoy, 76, citing Journal of Senate (1903), 20-84.
76 Barton, 230.
from taxation: the Senate bill would not go into effect until 1904, and it did exempt bonds. On March 6, the Assembly passed their bill unanimously. It then went to the Senate where it was amended. A conference resulted. Meanwhile, also on March 6, the railway commission bill, providing for a commission to fix the rates charged by the railroads, was introduced into the Assembly. This posed a problem for the railroad lobbyists. They feared to defeat both of the railroad bills because of the public temper. The commission bill was more obnoxious than the tax bill because the roads figured that they could cover the increased taxes by charging higher freight rates. Moreover, the commission bill was easier to defeat because it had been suggested by the governor and the tax bill was a product of the tax commission. Therefore, the railroads decided to defeat the commission bill and the tax measure was, consequently, passed. 77

This measure remedied a long-standing inequity. La Follette had fought for it for many years and deserves most of the credit for its eventual passage. It forced the railroads to bear their full share of taxation and added more than $600,000 a year to the state revenue. 78 It made the market price of railroad stocks and bonds the basis of new assessments and this was checked against engineers' estimates of the cost of replacement. 79

The legislature of 1903 had defeated the railway commission and La Follette took this issue to the people. It was one of the major issues

77 Ibid., 243-245.
78 DeWitt, 56.
79 Lovejoy, 83.
in his campaign of 1904. He worked hard to impress upon the people the
need for the regulation of the railroads and the trusts. 80 When the
election was over and he was governor of Wisconsin for another term, La
Follette went to the legislature and recommended the commission. This was,
of course, designed to prevent the railroads from raising their rates to
cover their increased taxes. La Follette urged the creation of a commission
having full supervision over the reasonableness of rates. 81 So strong had
the progressive spirit become in the state that the bill was passed unani-
mously. 82

This same legislature of 1905 enacted into law another of La Follette's
measures. He had long campaigned against the policy of corporations giving
free passes or franking privileges to officials. A law forbidding this
procedure had been passed in 1899 83 but was difficult to enforce. In
1905, the legislature moved to correct this. A law was enacted requiring
all railroads to file their lists of passes with the state. This simplified
supervision. Also, the state declared that passes given newspaper men in
return for "free" advertising must be listed as earnings. This stopped the
passes and left the newspapers free of railroad pressure. 84

When La Follette arrived in Washington as United States Senator from
Wisconsin, the debate over the Hepburn bill was in process in the Senate.

80 Ibid., 89.
81 Haugen, 138-139.
82 La Follette, 345.
83 Barton, 138.
84 Ibid., 284.
Despite the usual prohibition against newcomers speaking, La Follette, feeling that because of his fight in Wisconsin he had something to contribute, took the floor. His speech, according to the press of the day, was one of the most thoroughgoing discussions of the railroad regulation problem that had so far been heard in the national Capitol. It touched on the basic principles involved in the problem. Its chief proposition was the physical valuation of railroads as a basis in rate-making. He incorporated this in amendments to the bill—and to other measures that came up—but was voted down. This speech of La Follette, the neophyte, gave the progressive movement in the Republican party the stimulus that was to quicken it into organized, individual life. From this moment, Republican insurgency in Congress began taking tangible form. 85

While in Congress, La Follette tried to strengthen the power of the Interstate Commerce Commission. It was his fight, and that of other progressives, which made the Mann-Elkins act, passed on June 3, 1910, as strong as it was. He was in the Senate throughout Taft's administration and consistently supported those measures designed to limit the power of the trusts. 86

Although La Follette did not have the opportunities of Roosevelt to fight the corporate interests, he was consistent in his efforts to regulate them for the public good and he did not confuse the issue with platitudes about good and bad trusts. La Follette was one of the leaders in the fight

85 Ibid., 284.
86 Mowry, 100.
against trusts. He did not want to destroy them but he did believe that there should be the same ethical standards for corporations as for individuals. He never doubted the validity of that theory and it formed the "warp and woof of a social and economic creed to which he was passionately devoted." 87

La Follette's stand on the tariff, likewise, bears closer examination than does Roosevelt's. Coming as he did from an agricultural area, he was naturally opposed to the high tariff on manufactured goods that was designed to protect the industrialists. In his opening speech of the 1902 campaign, he showed his comprehension of the problem by demanding that the national government revise the tariff schedules so that they would be fairer to the country as a whole. 88 The plank in his 1904 platform might well have formed the basis of the one in the Progressive party platform in 1912. It stated that:

> We firmly adhere to the fundamental Republican doctrine of protection to American labor, and believe that the aim of a truly protective policy should be to stimulate competition in the home market and not destroy it by favoring trust combinations. We therefore believe in a readjustment of tariff schedules in all cases where protection is employed for the benefit of capital and only to the injury of the consumer and working man. 89

Yet it must be confessed that all of La Follette's early record was not without blemish. During his service in the House of Representatives, he had served on the committee which prepared the McKinley bill and he had

88 Lovejoy, 71.
89 Haugen, 147.
supported this measure. 90

La Follette more than redeemed himself for his stand on the McKinley Tariff bill when he next returned to Washington as a Senator. Then he led the fight on the Payne-Aldrich Tariff. He had the Bureau of Statistics of the Department of Commerce and Labor prepare a table comparing the Payne-Aldrich Tariff with the Dingley Tariff to disprove Aldrich's contention that the former was a reduction. He read this report into the Congressional Record. It showed that the Payne-Aldrich measure levied an ad valorem tax of 41.77 per cent on incoming goods, whereas the equivalent ad valorem tax of the Dingley bill was only 40.21 per cent. 91 Despite La Follette's efforts to defeat it, the Payne-Aldrich Tariff became a law but, when the bill was put to a vote, there were ten Republicans who voted with the Democrats against it. These were the nucleus of the progressive movement within Congress. 92 La Follette was certainly in step with the Progressive party platform as far as the tariff was concerned.

In concluding this chapter, there is still another part of the Progressive party platform that bears examination. Although not exclusively a matter of the trusts, it vitally concerned them and was largely directed against them. This is the policy of conservation.

There is one phase of Roosevelt's record about which there is unanimous agreement. He was a firm supporter of the policy of conservation of our

90 Raney, 297.
91 Mowry, 52, citing Congressional Record, 61 Congress, 1 Session, vol. 114, 1447.
92 Raney, 297.
natural resources and even those unfriendly to him list this as a great accomplishment of his administration. 93 His interest began early and he had promoted the cause while still governor of New York. 94 His record as president needs no repetition. Even La Follette praised his stand. 95 In this, Roosevelt was in perfect agreement with the Progressive party platform.

The platform devoted much time to the discussion of the problem of conservation. Briefly, it urged that the lands containing natural resources—coal, oil, forests, and water power—should be held by the government but be open to the constructive use of the public. 96

Despite the fact that La Follette gained no fame for his part in the conservation movement, he was no less a regular supporter of it than Roosevelt. As governor of Wisconsin, he urged the development of natural resources of the state, but under such conditions as would protect these resources from exploitation. 97 His first speech in the Senate put forward an amendment to the Hepburn bill forbidding railroads to acquire title to Indian coal lands, thus saving many square miles of valuable lands from unnecessary exploitation. 98 As a fledging Congressman, he prevented the railroads from gaining much land through the Sioux Indian reservation which

94 Roosevelt, Works, XV, 21-22.
95 Roosevelt, Autobiography, 422.
96 Payne, 313-314, from the Progressive Party Platform.
98 Ibid., 329-330.
they claimed they needed as a right of way. 99 He loyally supported the conservation program under both Roosevelt and Taft. 100 It would seem that both La Follette and Roosevelt were in harmony with the policy of conservation advocated by the Progressive party platform.

In summary, it is clear that, although not attracting as much attention, La Follette worked more consistently for the regulation of corporations and for a fair tariff than did Roosevelt. Both men were actively interested in and supported conservation. It should be mentioned, however, that Roosevelt was forced to deal with the problem on a national scale and to take into consideration the temper, not only of his own industrial state of New York, but of the people throughout the country. La Follette, on the other hand, was limited in his activities largely to his own state and Wisconsin was essentially an agricultural state where regulation of the trusts was more universally desired and easier to enforce. Moreover, Roosevelt must be given credit for the attention which he brought to the matter. Even though, as in most cases, he said more than he did, he did rouse the people to the need for some curb on the growing power of the large corporations.

99 La Follette, 75.
100 Pringle, 431.
The question of Roosevelt's motives in 1912 will always be a matter for discussion, and the discussion is unlikely to reach any permanent conclusion. Facts can be given and a deduction made but its accuracy will always be open to question. It is possible that even Roosevelt himself could not have honestly interpreted his actions for, once he became a candidate, he undoubtedly convinced himself of the righteousness of his cause. Here we can only look at some of the incidents of the period before the campaign and try to determine if they indicated a genuine interest in the progressive cause or whether they were indicative of personal ambition.

While Roosevelt was still in Africa, his name was mentioned as a possible Republican presidential nominee. 1 When he did arrive in the States, he was greeted by a large and enthusiastic crowd. He evidently expected this type of reception for he wrote before he arrived that he hoped that arrangements would be made so that as few of the crowd as possible would be disappointed. 2 Yet, Roosevelt declared upon his return that he had no intention of taking part in the fight then going on between the progressive and regular Republicans and that he hoped to reunite the party. 3

1 Mowry, 118, citing Chicago Tribune, February 14, 1910.
2 Ibid., 121, citing Letter of Roosevelt to William Loeb, April 21, 1910, Roosevelt MSS.
3 Ibid., 132, citing Letters of Roosevelt to General J. M. Ashton, July 22, 1910 and to E. F. Waggoner, July 14, 1910, Roosevelt, MSS.
This, he later found, was impossible and so joined the progressive movement and, according to his friends, was drafted into the presidential nomination. Before the draft took place, however, there does seem to have been some attempt to sound out public opinion. In mid-June of 1910, about the time that Roosevelt was arriving in New York, the Roosevelt Club of St. Paul, Minnesota held a meeting at which Gifford Pinchot and James Garfield were present. The president of the Club, in his after-dinner speech, predicted the birth of a new party with Roosevelt, Pinchot, and Garfield as its leaders. When Garfield and Pinchot rose to speak, they did not deny the ambitious statements of the president. Thus, some people, even people close to Roosevelt, were evidently considering the possibility of his candidacy and a new party long before both of these things became actualities.

Roosevelt, himself, refused to commit himself definitely, but he did keep saying that he was not seeking the nomination. He gave some indication in his correspondence for the reason for his attitude. He felt that the Republicans would be defeated in 1912 because of the irreconcilable split in the party. Only defeat would bring the "Conservatives" and the "Progressives" together. Because of this, Roosevelt felt that it would be best to nominate Taft and go down to defeat. Then the party could reorganize for victory in 1916 under "some progressive leadership". It was this idea

4 De Witt, 79-80.
5 Mowry, 118, citing Milwaukee Sentinel and Des Moines Register and Leader, June 12, 1910; Kansas City Star, June 13, 1910.
6 Ibid., 175-176, citing Letter of Roosevelt to John C. Greenway, November 21, 1910, and to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., January 2, 1911.
that may have caused him to refuse to support the National Progressive Republican League. If he wanted to head the reorganization of his party, he could not alienate the conservatives by supporting the League, and he could not repudiate all of its principles for fear of angering the Progressives.

But all of Roosevelt's friends were not as hesitant. They dropped many hints which led La Follette to believe later on that Roosevelt was planning to be a candidate long before he made his official announcement. When the Progressives met in Chicago in October of 1911, they endorsed La Follette's candidacy. But Outlook, a magazine extremely sympathetic to Roosevelt, said that "This endorsement is to be regarded as a recommendation rather than a committal of the movement to any one man." Later in that same year, George Perkins, a Morgan partner, put his checkbook at the disposal of Roosevelt's campaign, although the latter had not yet "tossed his hat into the ring." Once the new year dawned, things developed more rapidly. On January 1, 1912, the Ohio Progressives met in conference and declared that Roosevelt was to be considered a presidential possibility. On January 10, William Allen White started a "Roosevelt or Bust!" campaign in his Emporia Gazette. On January 20, Cummins of Iowa announced that he was a candidate for the nomination. This was the first break in the Progressive front. The way was prepared for Roosevelt's

7 Ibid., 176.
8 La Follette, 532; also Costigan Papers, 175.
9 Ibid., 533.
10 Mowry, 200.
11 La Follette, Chapter XII. This account is a summary of the chapter.
candidacy.

It is my own belief that Roosevelt himself gave the best explanation of these events. He did not want to run and lose in 1912, feeling that that would destroy his chances in 1916. But when he found that the Progressives had a chance to win in 1912, he decided that he, and not La Follette, should be the winner. This is consistent with the urge for power which seemed a dominant characteristic of Roosevelt's. It was an urge tempered by the strong conviction that he could use that power in the interests of the people as he saw these interests. 12 He undoubtedly convinced himself that he would be of greater benefit to the people in the White House than would La Follette.

Now it is for us to decide whether Roosevelt's conclusion was correct. Progressivism was born of a fresh consciousness of the necessity of curbing the dangerous and growing tendencies toward industrial and commercial despotism on the part of organized wealth, a new realization of the justice of the age-old demand for equal opportunities for all, and a determination to insist on its more general observance. 13 In order to put their ideas into practice, the Progressives put their faith in the American people. They believed in teaching the people the facts. Then the people would instinctively choose the morally right course, they felt. 14 This tendency to put facts before the people was most marked in La Follette. He always

---

12 Mowry, 15.
13 Barton, 23.
14 Lovejoy, 97.
kept his constituents informed concerning the issues before him. 15 We find no similar tendency in Roosevelt.

Roosevelt, as has been already mentioned, stayed within the framework of the Republican party throughout his career until 1912. And it was the conservative branch of the party that gave him support. He was nominated by the conservatives in 1904 and ran on a conservative platform. 16 He had, it is true, showed some sympathy with progressive ideas early in his first administration, but had beat a strategic retreat as the 1904 election approached. He withdrew his support of downward revision of the tariff because he doubted if such revision was wise just before an election. 17 He became more kindly disposed toward Aldrich and his fellow-conservatives in Congress. 18 He was, in other words, "mending his political fences" with the demands of expediency. In 1908, Roosevelt again compromised with the conservatives in order to obtain the nomination of Taft. One of the few progressive planks that found its way into the platform was the suggestion of a downward revision of the tariff--a promise later reneged on. 19

Despite the evidence, Roosevelt was capable of vocally expressing his progressive sentiments very well. Classifying himself as a Progressive at the meeting of the New York State Committee on the eve of the State Convention, he said: "Our fight is squared against corruption and the un-

15 La Follette, 63-67.
16 Mowry, 22.
17 Pringle, 353, citing Letter of Roosevelt to J. B. Bishop, April 27, 1903.
18 Ibid., 353, citing Letter of Roosevelt to W. H. Taft, March 3, 1903,
   in Stephenson, Aldrich, 218.
19 Mowry, 31.
clean bossism that has bred corruption." 20 That would imply that he favored political reform that was directed at eliminating the bosses. Yet, much earlier, he had cautioned against revolutionary change in method.

In every governmental process the aim that a people capable of self-government should steadfastly keep in mind is to proceed by evolution rather than revolution. 21

And this statement was made in 1902, after La Follette had already been fighting for the revolutionary change that was the direct primary for almost five years. Roosevelt evidently still believed that gradual change was desirable in 1912, for he objected to the initiative and referendum in the National Progressive Republican League's Declaration of Principles. 22

Even in his statements proclaiming himself a progressive, he was ambiguous on the question of letting the people really rule. He said that popular rule was merely a means to an end, that end being the development of "the right kind of private citizens and the right kind of public servants." 23 Although the idea was acceptable, it did relegate reform to a secondary place and voiced the moral generalities that Roosevelt was so fond of expressing.

Roosevelt's policy on trusts sounded adequate, too. Speaking at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on October 4, 1906, he said: "The Government ought not to conduct the business of the country; but it ought to regulate it so that it shall be conducted in the interest of the public." 24 Yet,

20 Payne, 34.
21 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 59.
22 Pringle, 349, citing Outlook, January 14, 1911.
23 Chicago Tribune, January 31, 1911.
24 Bishop, II, 32.
an examination of the facts would lead one to believe that there was little regulation while Roosevelt was in the presidency. There were 149 trusts when he took office in 1900, representing four billion dollars in approximate capitalization. When he went out of office, there were 10,020 trusts with a capitalization of virtually thirty-one billion dollars, seventy percent of which has been estimated as pure water. 25 That does not constitute an impressive record for a "trust-buster".

Roosevelt talked well of labor, also. In an address to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, September 8, 1902, he stated: "I believe emphatically in organized labor." 26 Yet he was opposed to Governor Altgeld of Illinois "who alone stood out as an example of the Progressive type of governor." 27 Roosevelt said that "Altgeld is as emphatically the foe of decent government as Tweed, himself, and is capable of doing far more damage than Tweed. The Governor is the foe of every true American and is the foe particularly of every honest workingman." 28 Labor could not have been comforted by his words relative to labor legislation, either.

Most certainly we should never invoke the interference of the State or Nation unless it is absolutely necessary; but it is equally true that when confident of its necessity we should not on academic grounds refuse it. 29

Such a statement left much leeway, for there could be much difference of opinion as to what constituted "absolutely necessary". Roosevelt also showed

25 Chamberlain, 271.
26 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 69.
27 Chamberlain, 73.
28 Roosevelt, American Ideals, 7.
29 Roosevelt, Policy, I, 129.
a disposition to remain friends with capital and he expressed the desire to have it known that there were crooks and scoundrels in the ranks of labor as well as capital. 30 While this was undoubtedly true, most of the men concerned with labor problems were more interested in the many thousands of honest workingmen than in the few dishonest organizers.

Maybe all of the points which we have been making are indicative of Roosevelt's tendency to keep "to the middle of the road". He would progress to a certain point in his program to ward off unrest, and then would make energetic efforts to appease the right wing. 31 That would explain the statement that was meant for Hiram Johnson: "I am with the insurgents in this fight but not for publication". 32 That was hardly the kind of support that the Progressives needed. But Roosevelt was loath to take a stand that would make it embarrassing to change his mind. Only on the question of conservation, and possibly civil service, was Roosevelt unchanging.

Roosevelt once said, in an address to the Syracuse, New York, Chamber of Commerce on February 22, 1899: "I do not believe in hypocrisy." 33 Yet he showed a remarkable facility for contradicting himself, in word and deed, if by that contradiction he could further his career. 34 Some of his reversals, we have already mentioned. Roosevelt was definitely anti-labor in the New York Assembly, became at least vocally pro-labor after he came

30 Mowry, 193, citing Letter of Roosevelt to Hiram Johnson, October 27, 1911, Roosevelt MSS.
31 Pringle, 427.
32 Mowry, 132, citing Letter of Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., August 10, 1910, Roosevelt MSS.
33 Roosevelt, Public Papers, 274.
34 Chamberlain, 266.
to the presidency, and later said that, if he were Wilson, he would not
have signed the Adamson eight-hour day bill. He also felt that certain
things were just when he did them, and unjust when they were done to him.
His conduct in the 1908 and 1912 conventions is a good illustration of this.
He could even compromise on morals when political expediency demanded it.
He chose to ignore the Erie Canal frauds as Governor of New York, because
his own Republican party had perpetrated them. 35 Roosevelt was a surface
swimmer, always aware of the best thing for his career. He would roar
invocations to morality and then suddenly descend to political bargaining. 36
Possibly that fit into his idea of practical politics, but it hardly made
for sincerity as a reformer.

Yet no one can condemn Roosevelt entirely. He did serve a purpose,
and served it better than anyone else could have done. The very moralities
and platitudes that he was so fond of voicing served to glamorize the
movement and obtain for it the needed publicity. He was an intriguing
figure himself, and the interest in him was transferred to the movement.
The grim, never-compromising sincerity of a La Follette would never have
received the publicity that the effervescent of Roosevelt did. As one
author has said: "Roosevelt's greatest contribution to Insurgency did not
lie in his concrete legislative achievements. Rather it was his moral
crusade against evil, his raising of the ideals of the Populists, Bryan,
and the muckrakers to the level of respectability." 37

35 Ibid., 266-268.
36 Ibid., 265.
37 Hechler, 24.
Roosevelt brought to the movement his whirlwind enthusiasm and dramatized the issues involved. His legislative achievements were greatest in the field of conservation; his trust-busting was confined to some isolated attacks on specific combinations; his efforts at railroad regulation fell short of the progressive ideal of La Follette, who wanted to make physical evaluation the basis for establishing rates. Yet, with it all, it is extremely unlikely that the progressive movement would ever have attained its position of national prominence without the support of Theodore Roosevelt.

In La Follette, we find a different type of person than Roosevelt. La Follette was the man responsible for the establishment of the "Wisconsin Idea" in his home state. Something of his motivation can be gained from an examination of this idea. It was brought from Germany, where the government was experiencing its first pangs of social consciousness. It was based on the belief that it pays the state to concern itself with the betterment of human beings and the protection of human welfare. Its doctrine was that "business and human welfare can increase side by side" and "laws can be so constructed as to lead to progress and at the same time preserve to the fullest all human betterment." The "Wisconsin Idea" advocated railroad regulation, sanitation, and social legislation in the hands of experts who would deal justly and wisely with every interest in the state. It aimed at efficiency and social and industrial betterment. La Follette was

38 Haynes, 395.
40 Haynes, 366.
impregnated with this idea at the University of Wisconsin and it was the basis of his program for his state.

La Follette added to the German concept by sponsoring greater participation by the people in their government. He felt that was an essential part of the progressive movement. He had great faith in the people and high hopes of the wisdom of their action. At an address before the Republican Platform Convention in 1910, he gave expression to his feelings relative to the people and the progressive movement. At that time he said: "It (the progressive movement) comprehends the aspirations of the human race in its struggle from the beginning to the present time." He continued by saying that laws are made to carry out the will of the people, and when they fail to do so, they must be changed; "for over all and above all and greater than all, and expressing the supreme sovereignty of all are the people." 41 And in order that the people themselves could care for their interests, he fought for political reform. The direct primary law in Wisconsin was of his making. The other reformers "would have fallen to the ground but for the timely arrival upon the field of the Governor...To him belongs the credit for the victory." 42 La Follette did not just talk about modifying the system of government so as to restore the "sovereignty of the people and carry out their will to rule." 43 He did something about the situation.

La Follette also saw in the progressive movement the fight "for the rights of all the people against the encroachments of a powerful few." 44

---

41 Torrelle, 182.
42 Lovejoy, 96, citing an unpublished letter by A. R. Hall in the files of Fred L. Holmes.
43 Haynes, 425, citing the American Yearbook, 1912, 2-3.
44 Ibid., 425, citation as above.
From that idea came his fight against the special privilege that could bend a government to its own will. In order to distribute the cost of government more equitably, he recommended an income tax in his message to the legislature in 1903. 45 He worked to reform the taxation system of Wisconsin, where there was definite need for reform because of the great undervaluation of property. 46 He protected the people's interests when he insisted on a commerce commission to regulate rates within his state. He worked on the very logical principle that it was the state's duty to furnish transportation facilities and, since the function was delegated to the railroads, it was the duty of the state to regulate them so that they were required to furnish adequate service at reasonable rates. 47 Certainly that was protecting the interests of the people against the interests of the few.

La Follette's efforts inevitably made enemies for him. But, unlike Roosevelt, he made no attempt to appease these enemies. He voluntarily chose to fight his party after the Sawyer-Siebecker affair. 48 Only once did he go back consciously to the policy of friendship with the conservatives. That was in 1900. In that year, he announced his candidacy for the governorship for the third time. There were five other candidates in the field. La Follette was so strong, however, that these withdrew. 49 Then he attempted to restrain opposition to the "machine" by his supporters. He

45 Haugen, 137.
46 Philipp, 105.
47 McCarthy, 39.
48 Barton, 52.
49 Philipp, 24.
even tried to reach a harmony agreement with the regular Republicans, agreeing to give no objection to the reelection of Spooner to the Senatorship if they would support him for the governorship. In order to insure himself general support, he avoided all mention of controversial state issues except the primary election law. He was especially quiet on the question of railroad regulation. But he found that his efforts to establish peace were in vain. The regulars, although they supported him in the election, did all in their power to destroy his planned legislative program. This was inconsistent with La Follette's ideas and he told the regulars that "to violate promises of that platform is to cheat and betray the voter."  

The "Stalwarts" did not take kindly to La Follette's reprimand, and they accused him of an attempt to become dictator of the state. They viewed "with alarm the persistent effort to strengthen the executive at the expense of the legislative department of the state." Despite these statements, the "Stalwarts" again supported La Follette when he was nominated in 1902. This time, however, the governor made no effort to enlist the support of the conservatives, and he continued to fight for his reforms despite their objections. So persistent was his effort that the "Stalwarts" bolted the Republican convention in 1904, and refused to support La Follette. They even went so far as to form a new party, and they called themselves the

---

50 Barton, 142.
51 Ibid., 161.
52 Torrelle, 41-47.
53 Philipp, 52.
"National Republicans". However, even this drastic step did not defeat La Follette. And he, in turn, never repeated his mistake of 1900 by allying himself with the "Stalwarts".

While La Follette did not receive the support of the conservative element within his party, there were many in his state who supported him. The feeling in regard to him was well expressed by the Milwaukee Journal and was a testimony to him. The Journal said: "He stands for principles which are the very basis and foundation of representative government" and then listed these as: "The equal right of every man to express his choice for candidates by direct vote", and "the equal distribution of all burdens of government by taxing the property of corporations the same as the property of individuals is taxed." 55

When he became a United States Senator, La Follette consistently supported the very things for which he had fought in Wisconsin. In the Senate, his leadership was all-important in solidifying and vitalizing progressive sentiment. He was a rallying point for the other Insurgents. It was La Follette who founded the National Progressive Republican League, and he was, at first, its unanimous choice for the presidency. 56 He showed his devotion to the cause of reform in a speech which he made in 1911, after the formation of the League. He then completely stated his program, and it included "Congressional legislation to prevent unreasonable restraints of trade", taxation "based on physical valuation of corporate

54 Lovejoy, 87-88.
55 Ibid., 70, citing Milwaukee Journal, July 12, 1902.
56 La Follette, 519.
properties and the cost of production", "a permanent, non-partisan, scientific tariff commission" to establish duties. He favored "the direct primary for selection of delegates to conventions, the Presidential preference primary, the popular vote to be binding upon the action of the delegates." And he stood "for the initiative and referendum and the recall, including the recall of judges." 57 Certainly there could be no more sweeping and definite statement of support for progressive principles. There was no attempt to express generalities or platitudes here.

Yet, for all of his sincerity, La Follette did not have the power to strike fear into the hearts of the conservatives that did Roosevelt. He was so far in advance of his time, that they were likely to disregard him as too radical to enlist popular support. This was shown at the time that Taft was trying to regain the leadership of the Republican party. Then, one of his supporters wrote that "what La Follette says doesn't seem to hurt." 58 Yet, it was because of this same La Follette, and the "radicals" like him, that as much was accomplished toward reform as was done.

As all was not bad with Roosevelt, all was not good with La Follette. He was always an obstinate man, and he became unnecessarily so as he got older. He insisted on his own plans and views, and whatever stood in the way had to be sacrificed. 59 He was ambitious, too. He had designs on

57 Haynes, 425, citing the American Yearbook, 1912, 2-3.
58 Mowry, 106, citing Letter of J. Adam Bede to Carter, March 5, 1910, Carter MSS.
59 Barton, 278.
the presidency, and pushed himself to the front in order to attract attention to himself. 60 He was a hard man to get along with because of his inability to compromise, yet this very fact marked him as a sincere reformer.

La Follette was a man of high morals in public life. He viewed the problems of state as well as of the individual in the clear, white light of ethics, and there was no compromising with expedience permitted in either case. 61 This was what made his work of such value. He was the consistent beacon to which all progressives could turn; there was no wavering of his light. Bristow summed up his greatest contribution in the words: "La Follette is the crusader, the pioneer. He has blazed the way and opened the road for the rest of us to follow him..." 62 He was a leader in the Middle West, too. He became governor of Wisconsin about the time that Altgeld died, and this carried on the progressive succession. 63

Chamberlain says that La Follette and Louis D. Brandeis were "the most intelligent of the Progressives who took over the ideas of the Populists in an attempt to make them nationally effective." 64 As might be expected, he based his program on education of the people. He believed that, when the people saw the truth, the "politicians could not keep the truth off the statute books." 65 He believed in issues, and he always had one when he appealed to the people for election. 66 He was a consistent supporter of

60 Haugen, 151.
61 Torrelle, "Forward", 12.
63 Chamberlain, 73.
64 Ibid., 233.
66 La Follette, 63-67.
the progressive idea that the people should be educated to be masters of their own destiny.

There remains now only a general comparison of Roosevelt and La Follette in order to determine which was the better representative of Liberal Republican principles. Going back to the beginnings of the two men, La Follette's background made him a born democrat; Roosevelt came closer to the English ideal of the disinterested gentleman in politics—which implied disinterestedness within a class orbit, of course. It was no aberration that dictated Roosevelt's genuine detestation of Thomas Jefferson. This dislike was strangely inconsistent with the opening paragraph of the Progressive party's platform which held "with Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln that the people are masters of the Constitution." 67 Roosevelt chose his friends and advisers from within his aristocratic circle, and he was not one to suffer men in denim shirts gladly outside of his ranch in the West. La Follette, on the other hand, had a mythical faith in "the people"; he believed that, provided there was plenty of light, the common man would find his own way. The superior population of Wisconsin was "excuse enough for his credo." 68

Roosevelt yearned for the approval of history and simply wanted legislative action. He demanded paper results to show for his term in office. He was not at all unwilling to take compromise if that would get a measure onto the statute books. La Follette, however, preferred to fight rather

67 Payne, 304.
68 Chamberlain, 243.
than to acquiesce in a bad measure. 69 There was one of the fundamental differences between the two men. Roosevelt could see nothing wrong in taking "half a loaf". But La Follette felt that where a principle was involved "no bread is often better than half a loaf." He did not believe in jeopardizing his chances to get a true reform measure by stunting the appetite of the people with a half-way measure. 70

La Follette was a man who sought to make strict economic analysis the basis of his laws; he never talked without facts. 71 He made tremendous use of the University of Wisconsin; appointing its faculty to the commissions which he instituted and calling upon it to compile the lists of statistics with which he confronted the voters. 72 Roosevelt, on the other hand, was "rather an agnostic in matters of economics." He never understood the spirit of the laboratory, the spirit that was the hope of the Progressive, or Liberal, movement. 73

Roosevelt, for all of his compromising, ended up with a pitifully small amount of achievement to show for his administration. And when he left the presidency, he left the country too. It was La Follette, with his grim tenacity, who persisted in carrying the Progressive fight through the Taft administration. 74 It was La Follette who organized the Progressive cause. He made it possible to fight for a Republican Progressive as the

69 Ibid., 245.
70 La Follette, 268.
71 Chamberlain, 237.
73 Chamberlain, 237.
74 Ibid., 241.
presidential nominee in 1912, when he founded the National Progressive Republican League. La Follette said that the cause of the Progressives made more converts and fared better while Roosevelt was in Africa than while he was in the White House. 75 There is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in this. Roosevelt served to confuse the issues while he was president by his contradictory statements and action. He talked as a progressive and acted as a conservative; Taft acted in a progressive manner while he spoke as a conservative. More people listen than think, and a great anger arose against Taft that served to solidify progressive sentiment in the country.

There is no one who can say that La Follette would have been nominated by the Republicans, and elected to the presidency in 1912, if Roosevelt had refrained from placing himself in the picture as a candidate. It is my own opinion that, even if he had obtained the Republican nomination, he could not have been elected. He did not have sufficient strength in the East to carry a national election. Yet I do feel that he would have been more truly representative of the ideals for which the Progressives had fought than was Roosevelt. La Follette had proven that his devotion to the cause of reform was sincere, unchanging, and dependable. He was words and deed in close alliance. Roosevelt, on the other hand, was not at all dependable. He talked much, and evidently sincerely thought that he had done much. In actuality, his deeds were few, and then not always completely progressive. He hypnotized himself into believing of himself what was most flattering and most beneficial to him.

75 La Follette, 478-479.
Yet each man played a vital part in the progressive movement. La Follette was the crusader, the trail-blazer, the unbending disciple of reform. Even Roosevelt acknowledged his preeminent position in the movement. 76 He served to awaken the public's thought and conscience to the evils that were rampant. He was the unbreakable steel heart of the movement. He remained true even after the war had returned the country to "Normalcy" and the other leaders had deserted the cause. 77 Roosevelt, not nearly so much a true progressive, was the "icing" on the outside of the progressive "cake". His personality made the movement one of interest to the public. He posed many pertinent questions and, while he did little to solve them himself, he did create a national demand that these questions be met and answered. He did not make the people think, as did La Follette, but he carried them along by the enthusiasm of his very nature. There was danger, of course, in this method, for enthusiasm can die out and leave nothing in its wake. But there was need for some enthusiasm, and Roosevelt gave it. He was the best publicity man that the Progressive cause ever had. 78

---

76 Torrelle, "Forward", 10.
77 Ibid., 11-12.
78 Mowry, 16.
In looking for material, I went first to the card catalogue, where I looked under the headings "La Follette", "Roosevelt", "Wisconsin", and "Progressive Party". I found that there is an excellent bibliography of La Follette, An Annotated Bibliography of Robert M. La Follette, the Man and His Work, by Ernest W. Stirn, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1937. This was very helpful and is an excellent and very comprehensive work. It was especially beneficial in view of the fact that La Follette has not published nor had published about him as much as Roosevelt. I also used Poole's Index and the Reader's Guide covering the years from 1880 to 1912 in order to find the articles published in periodicals, especially on La Follette. Insofar as possible, I avoided using articles in contemporary publications because I found them so biased on the subject under discussion.

We will list first those articles taken from periodicals. With the exception of three, I think that we may classify the magazines as source material. Two of these are by Bruce Bliven, who is very sympathetic toward La Follette. He wrote "Robert M. La Follette" in New Republica, XLIII, no. 552, New York, 144-145 (July 1, 1925); and "Robert M. La Follette's Place in Our History" in the August, 1925 issue of Current History, XXII, no. 5, New York Times Company, New York, 716-722. Another article written after La Follette's death was Frederic A. Ogg, "Robert M. La Follette in Retrospect", Current History, XXXIII, no number, New York Times Company, New York, 685-691 (February, 1931). This is a very fine and fair article.
I took three articles from *The American Magazine*, Phillips Publishing Company, no place; and all three were sympathetic to La Follette and the progressive movement. Ray Stannard Baker wrote two of the articles: "Is the Republican Party Breaking Up? The Story of the Insurgent West", February, 1910, LXIX, no. 4, 435-438; and "The Meaning of Insurgency", May, 1911, LXXII, no. 1, 59-64. The other article is by William Allen White, "The Progressive Hen and the Insurgent Ducklings", January, 1911, LXXI, no. 3, 394-399. The *Outlook* was very interesting in the light of the fact that Theodore Roosevelt was a contributing editor. Although progressive in tone, it was never enthusiastically for La Follette. I consulted the editorials in the issues of February 4, 1911 (vol. 97, 245, 256-258); January 13, 1912 (vol. 100, 57-58); and in the volume 100, February 17, 1912, 337. In volume 100, I also used the issues of January 20, 1912, "La Follette as a Candidate, a Poll of the Press", 120-122; February 3, 1911, "Mr. La Follette as Seen from the Gallery", 255-256. And from the same magazine, I read "Governor La Follette's Ringing Message", May 25, 1901, vol. 68, no. 4, 199-201.

*Current Literature*, a Taft supporter, gave me two more references: "The Grooming of La Follette", November, 1911, LI, no. 5, 496-500; and a series of editorials in March, 1912, LIII, no. 3, 245-248. *The World's Work* likewise supplied two references. E. Ray Stevens wrote, in October, 1902, vol. IV, no. 6, about "The La Follette-Spooner Campaign" and, in July, 1911, William Bayard Hale wrote of "La Follette, Pioneer Progressive", XXII, no. 3, 14591-14600. Both of these are kind to La Follette although not biased in his behalf. Hale is really a Wilson supporter. The magazine
is published in New York by Doubleday, Page, and Company.

From Harper's Weekly, Harper and Brothers, New York, I read an article by Earle Hooker Eaton, "A Personal Sketch of Governor La Follette", XIVII, no. 2506, December 31, 1904, 2025-2026, that was pro-La Follette; and another in the same vein but on June 24, 1911 by Charles Johnston, "A Talk with La Follette", LV, no. 2844, 9. The Independent, New York, was the source of the article by T. S. Adams, "The Drama of Wisconsin Politics", LIV, no. 2800, 1824-1826, on July 31, 1902, that was very neutral in its attitude. In its editorial on February 15, 1912, "Senator La Follette's Disability", LXXII, no. 3298, 369-371, it shows a pro-Taft sentiment, although not critical of La Follette. The Literary Digest was a neutral source published in New York. On February 17, 1912, it carried an article called "Mr. La Follette, as Seen by His Party Press", XLIV, no. 7, 318-319; and on July 13, 1912, another "La Follette's Thrust at Roosevelt", XLV, no. 1, 48-49.

"The Wooing of Wall Street" was an amusing bit of satire in The Nation, New York, November 30, 1911, vol. 93, no. 2422, 312. It pokes fun at the progressives. Richard Lloyd Jones wrote a very favorable piece for La Follette in Collier's, New York, called "Among La Follette's People", XLV, no. 24, 17-18 (September 3, 1910).

Two earlier articles are a piece by Henry W. Wilbur, "A Coming Man", XXIII, 250-253, in the September, 1902, Gunston's Magazine, the Gunston Company, New York. Wilbur proved himself a good prophet. The last article is one by Lincoln Steffens in McClure's Magazine, S. S. McClure Company, New York, October, 1904. The article is one of a series called "Enemies
of the Republic" and its particular title is "Wisconsin: a State Where the People Have Restored Representative Government--The Story of Governor La Follette", XXVIII, no. 6, 563-579. It is, as the name suggests, favorable to La Follette.

In our analysis of the books used as reference for this paper, we can begin with those relating to the study of the progressive movement. First to be discussed are those sources concerned with the formation of the Progressive party. William Jennings Bryan, A Tale of Two Conventions being an Account of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions of June, 1912, with an Outline of the Progressive National Convention of August of the Same Year, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1912, is a reporter's version of events and was very helpful despite Bryan's lack of sympathy with both the Republican and Progressive conventions. In contrast, the Official Report of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Republican National Convention Held in Chicago, Illinois, June 18 through 22, 1912, Milton W. Blumberg, Official Reporter, The Tenny Press, New York City, 1912, was of no direct benefit although it did give a comprehension of the fight that the Roosevelt forces put up in that convention. Another book used chiefly to obtain background, and a fine work it was, is Backstage in 1912, the Inside Story of the Split Republican Convention, Dorrance and Company, Inc., Philadelphia, 1932. Rosewater was the 1912 chairman of the Republican National Committee and is, consequently, anti-Roosevelt, but it was enlightening to read the book in view of the number of things that have been written expressing Roosevelt's side of this dispute. A collection of letters and documents, Papers of Edward P. Costigan relating to the Progressive Movement in Colorado
1902-1917, edited by Colin B. Goodykoontz, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1941, was most informative and gave a picture of the progressive movement in the West. It also gave an excellent idea of the swing to Roosevelt in 1912. Our final source pertaining to the Progressive party is *The Birth of the New Party or Progressive Democracy* by George Henry Payne, J. L. Nichols and Company, Naperville, Ill., 1912. This book, written by an ardent supporter of the new party, was very pro-Roosevelt and not very reliable. It gave only those facts which reflected glory on Roosevelt.

Turning now to secondary works on progressivism, we have first *The Progressive Movement, Its Principles and Its Programme* by S. J. Duncan-Clark, Small, Maynard and Company, Boston, 1913. This sounded as though it would be very helpful, but it turned out to be a glorification of the "Bull-Moose" party and its platform, its convention, and its candidate. It was virtually useless. *The Progressive Movement, a Non-partisan, Comprehensive Discussion of Current Tendencies in American Politics* by Benjamin Parke De Witt, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915, proved much more helpful. It was really what its name implied. Another fine book, but one which covered only the last section of the period of the development of progressivism, was *Insurgency, Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era* by Kenneth W. Hechler, Columbia University Press, New York, 1940. This was well-footnoted, scholarly, and seemed unprejudiced.

There were also two books which treated the progressive movement in individual states and three which dealt with it in Wisconsin. Fred E. Haynes wrote *Third Party Movements Since the Civil War with Special Reference to Iowa*, The State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, 1916. This
was excellently foot-noted and largely from periodicals or other current literature. It treated both Roosevelt and La Follette with equal enthusiasm which made it more valuable. The Progressive Movement of 1912 and the Third Party Movement of 1924 in Maine by Elizabeth Ring, The Maine Bulletin, XXXV, no. 5, January, 1933, University of Maine Studies, second series, no. 26, was taken largely from periodicals and was foot-noted but was not in sufficient detail to be very helpful. The three books on Wisconsin included Charles McCarty, The Wisconsin Idea, the Macmillan Company, New York, 1912. This is a rambling account of the topic with profuse praise of Germany, where the "Wisconsin Idea" originated. It was not too helpful because it dealt largely with problems current in Wisconsin in 1912. On the other hand, Wisconsin, an Experiment in Democracy by Frederic C. Howe was very fine. It was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in New York in 1912. It was very sympathetic in its attitude toward La Follette and had to be used with some discretion as a result, but the author had a very comprehensive knowledge of his topic. This is natural in view of the fact that Howe was then secretary of the National Republican League and had been a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin. This book may almost be considered source since the author had such intimate connection with the movement of which he was writing. The last of the books on Wisconsin was William Francis Raney, Wisconsin, a Story of Progress, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1940. The volume included an excellent chapter on La Follette, and the entire work is very neutral in tone.

Next we will analyze those books that dealt with La Follette. The most helpful source, aside from the magazines already mentioned, was
La Follette's Autobiography, a Personal Narrative of Political Experiences by Robert M. La Follette, The Robert M. La Follette Co., Madison, Wisconsin, 1913. This was both interesting to read and very informative. In view of the author's interest in the topic under discussion, the book must be subjected to internal criticism, but I feel that it is remarkably truthful. Because of the fact that there is so little source material available, I was forced to make extensive use of this volume. Another book of source material that I consulted in part was Pioneer and Political Reminiscences (Wisconsin Magazine of History, volumes XI, XII, and XIII), The Antes Press, Evansville, Wisconsin, n. d., by Nils Haugen. Here again it was necessary to apply internal criticism. Although this book dealt with the progressive movement in Wisconsin in its entirety, I used chiefly that section that dealt with La Follette and so have listed it in this section. Ellen Torrelle, assisted by Albert O. Barton, and Fred L. Holmes, compiled The Political Philosophy of Robert M. La Follette as Revealed in His Speeches and Writings, The Robert M. La Follette Co., Madison, Wisconsin, 1920. Although this contained only direct selections, I felt that a conscious effort was made to select those which would reflect most to La Follette's credit. Of a very different nature was Political Reform in Wisconsin, a Historical Review of the Subjects of Primary Election, Taxation, and Railway Regulation by Emanuel L. Philipp, assisted by Edgar T. Wheelock, E. L. Philipp, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, n. d. This was written by an apologist of the "Stalwarts" and is naturally very anti-La Follette. From comparison with other books, I found that there were some errors in it. Yet more common than actual misinformation, was editing of facts to make them appear in an untrue light.
Although there is no date given in the book, I think that it was written around 1908. The last book which I am listing as source material on La Follette is *La Follette's Winning of Wisconsin, 1894-1904*, 2nd edition, Madison, Wisconsin, 1924 (The Homestead Company, Des Moines, Iowa). This might not be considered strictly source material but I have so listed it because Mr. Barton was intimately connected with the progressive movement during most of the time of which he writes. The book was very favorable to La Follette and had to be used with care for that reason.

Of the secondary references that I used, one of the best was Allen Fraser Lovejoy, *La Follette and the Establishment of the Direct Primary in Wisconsin, 1890-1904*, Yale University Press, New Haven Conn., 1941 (Patterson Prize Essays, Yale University, Vol. 1). This is carefully foot-noted almost entirely from source material. Although it is sympathetic to La Follette, it maintains a scholarly detachment. To learn something of La Follette's life from a neutral source, I consulted the *Dictionary of American Biography*. The article there on "Robert M. La Follette" is written by Frederic A. Paxson. The *Dictionary* itself is edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone and is published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938. The article I used is in volume X and covers pages 541-546. I also used Frank Harris, *Contemporary Portraits, "Senator La Follette"*, Brentano's, New York, 1923. The author is very definitely a liberal and, as a result, is very sympathetic to the Senator. The final reference used in my search for information regarding La Follette was Chester C. Platt, *What La Follette's State Is Doing, Some Battles Waged For More Freedom*, Batavia Times Press,
Batavia, New York, 1924. This was a rather worthless volume because it dealt with a later period than that of the paper. Moreover, it was violently partisan.

Before listing the references used in studying Roosevelt, I want to mention two books that dealt with reform in general rather than the progressive movement. One that was of great help regarding the history of the corrupt practices law was S. Gale Lowrie, *Corrupt Practices at Elections*, Comparative Legislative Bulletin, no. 23 of the Wisconsin Library Commission, Legislative Reference Department, Madison, Wisconsin, February, 1911. This was excellently foot-noted almost entirely from legislative sources. The second of the books on reform was *Farewell to Reform*, Being a History of the Rise, Life, and Decay of the Progressive Mind in America by John Chamberlain, Liveright, Inc., New York, 1933. Chapter Eight was entitled "The Progressive Mind in Action—La Follette and Roosevelt". Chamberlain was a newspaper man and the book is most interesting reading. His analysis of Roosevelt and La Follette is scintillating. He is very pro-La Follette and unerringly picks out every weak spot in the Colonel's armor. In spite of its interesting reading it must be subjected to criticism. Chamberlain is obviously liberal to the point of being almost radical and, thus, he has no sympathy with a "middle-of-the-roader" like Roosevelt.

In listing source material that was used regarding Roosevelt, it is best to begin with that written by Roosevelt himself. This list does not begin to cover all the works covered by him for he was a voluminous writer, but I have tried to use some of his key works. Since all these are by Theodore Roosevelt it will not be necessary to list the author's name with
each work. I first read Theodore Roosevelt, an Autobiography, Macmillan and Company, Limited, London, 1913. I did not, however, make much use of this in the paper for Roosevelt was anything but a modest man and was not always careful of the accuracy of the facts which he presented. Applied Ethics, one of the William Belden Noble Lectures for 1910, Howard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1911, was of little value except as a statement of Roosevelt's philosophy. Of more help, but very similar in content, was American Ideals, New Knickerbocker Edition, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1897. The Roosevelt Policy, Speeches, Letters and State Papers, relating to Corporate Wealth and Closely Allied Topics, two volumes, The Current Literature Publishing Company, New York, 1908, promised much but, after reading one or two speeches, I found that both volumes were repetitions of the same few ideas. Letters to Kermit from Theodore Roosevelt, 1902-1908, Will Irwin, editor, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1946, gave an interesting picture of Roosevelt as a father and also gave some idea of his own evaluation of his administration. One of the most helpful works on Roosevelt was Public Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, Governor, 1899, Brandow Printing Company, Albany, New York, 1899. Ranking with this was volume XV of The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, Herman Hagedorn, editor, National Edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1926. This was entitled State Papers as Governor and President, 1899-1909.

There were three other source books which I used relating to Theodore Roosevelt. Joseph Bucklin Bishop wrote and compiled Theodore Roosevelt and His Time Shown in His Own Letters, two volumes, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1920. The quotations contained in the book would be listed as
source material. They were, however, linked together with a narrative that was Mr. Bishop's own. Bishop was a great admirer of Roosevelt's and this is obvious in the work. Since the letter and speeches are excerpts, it is possible to include only those parts which are desired to give the correctly favorable impression of Roosevelt, and this has been done in some cases. I did not feel that this was an especially good source. William Dudley Foulke wrote *Roosevelt and the Spoilsman*, National Civil Service Reform League, New York, 1925. Foulke was a civil service commission under Roosevelt and because of his contact with most of the facts presented, I have listed this as a source. Foulke is very loyal to Roosevelt but the book seems fair. The last source was Oscar King Davis, *Released for Publication, Some Inside Political History of Theodore Roosevelt and His Time, 1898-1918*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1925. This is another book by a newspaper man and, though it made interesting reading, it was not too helpful except for background material. It dealt largely with anecdotes that showed Roosevelt's character and personality.

I read two biographies. The first was William Roscoe Thayer, *Theodore Roosevelt, an Intimate Biography*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1912. This was of very little use because the author was so definitely prejudiced in favor of Roosevelt. The other biography proved to be one of the most helpful books which I used. It was definitely the least biased and, therefore, one of the most unusual and most valuable. It was *Theodore Roosevelt, a Biography* by Henry F. Pringle, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1931. It was foot-noted almost entirely from source material, including the available manuscript sources. I would recommend this book highly.
The secondary works which dealt with the period rather than with just the man were two in number. Chapters Eight to Seventeen of James Ford Rhodes, *The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, 1897-1909*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1923, dealt with the administration of Roosevelt. This work was sympathetic to big business and still favorable to Roosevelt, an interesting situation. Although it was profusely foot-noted, Bishop was the usual reference. Since I read Bishop's books, I did not find this especially beneficial. Harold Howland wrote *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times, A Chronicle of the Progressive Movement* (The Chronicles of America Series, Allen Johnson, ed.), Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1921. This was exceedingly pro-Roosevelt; the author calls himself "another ardent supporter" of Theodore Roosevelt. There were very few foot-notes although there were many quotations. Here again, facts were distorted or misinterpreted to place Roosevelt in the most favorable light possible.

Finally, I read three books that dealt with particular phases of Theodore Roosevelt's history. Harold F. Gosnell did a competent piece on *Boss Platt and His New York, a Study of the Political Leadership of Thomas C. Platt, Theodore Roosevelt and Others*, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924. It was especially helpful in studying the topic of political reform. For Roosevelt's labor record, particularly as an Assemblyman and as Governor of New York, Howard Lawrence Hurwitz, *Theodore Roosevelt and Labor in New York State, 1880-1900*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1943, was excellent. It was copiously foot-noted, almost entirely from source material. It also was comparatively free from bias. The last book is *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* by George E. Mowry, University of
Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1946. It is well foot-noted from manuscript sources and current periodicals. Chapter One seemed weak but the rest was commendable. It was objective and treated the subject quite comprehensively although it concerned itself chiefly with the period after 1909.
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Lorraine M. Jung 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.

[Signature]
Date: June 12, 1947