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THE POLITICAL CAREER OF WILLIAM BOURKE COCKRAN.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1970
History, modern

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1970

THE POLITICAL CAREER OF WILLIAM BOURKE COCKRAN

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

1970

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply grateful to my teacher and mentor Professor Dorothy Ganfield Fowler of Hunter College not only for her patient and intense guidance during the past two years but also for the much longer period she needed to diligently teach me the requirements of careful scholarship. I wish to thank Professors Madeline Rice of Hunter College and Harold C. Syrett Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York for their courtesy in reading the manuscript and their significant contributions to its improvement. Professors Sidney Pomerantz of City College and Ari Hoogenboom of Brooklyn College have earned my thanks for their cooperation in the review committee but most especially for their willingness to read this dissertation so close in time to the defense date.

I owe much to Mr. Edward Flushing, Secretary of the History Department for his years of morale building and particularly for the help beyond the call of any reasonable duty in the last weeks before the completion of my degree requirements. I am also indebted to the librarians of the Manuscripts Division of the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress and the Library of the United States Military Academy for their assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

Winston Churchill wrote about the American orator William Bourke Cockran that he had never seen his equal. Cockran's conversation exceeded anything Churchill had ever heard "in point and pith, in rotundity, in antitheses and comprehension."¹ Representative Hamilton Fish Jr. declared that except for Theodore Roosevelt, Cockran was the ablest man he had ever met. Fish said that Cockran embodied all the qualities of oratory "such as has not been seen since the days of Webster, Clay and Calhoun."² The New York Sun after reporting Cockran's death on March 1, 1923 wrote that many who had heard the New York Congressman had contended that no one, not even Bryan in his prime, could match him as a public speaker.³

Not all his contemporaries shared in this adulation.

Cockran's detractors conceded his intellectual talents but accused

¹Winston S. Churchill, Amid These Storms: Thoughts and Adventures (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 52.

²United States Congress, Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), p. 7806.

³New York Sun, March 1, 1923, p. 1.

him of political opportunism and inconsistency, because he demonstrated independence when as a Democrat he openly supported McKinley in 1896 and followed Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. The Brooklyn Citizen characterized Cockran's political independence as a fatal weakness which vitiated his matchless talents and largely contributed to his failure to rise beyond the sphere of Representative.⁴ William Howard Taft in a 1905 letter to Helen Taft referred to Cockran as a pseudo-philosopher who reduced everything to a syllogism. Taft disapproved of Cockran's connections with Tammany Hall and accused him of being a participant in political sculduggery out of which he had amassed a fortune.⁵

William Bourke Cockran had a long and active political career which spanned forty-five of the more spectacular years in the development of this nation. He entered the public arena in the latter 1870's and remained a participant until his death in 1923. During this half century America had emerged from a primarily agricultural "developing nation" into an urban, industrialized world power. In this environment Cockran achieved fame as an orator, a leader in New York politics, a member of Congress, a respected lawyer, and devoted Catholic. In 1901 Notre Dame conferred on him

⁴The Brooklyn Citizen, March 2, 1923, p. 6.

⁵William Howard Taft to Helen Taft, September 24, 1905, in Taft MSS., Library of Congress.

the Laetare medal for outstanding service and in 1916 the Pope knighted him with the Equestran Order of St. Gregory, the highest lay order in the Catholic Church, for distinguished work in the name of his religion. He also received honorary degrees from Francis Xavier College, Georgetown College, Manhattan College and St. John's College in Brooklyn.⁶

Despite all of these achievements, Cockran remains a relatively unknown figure. Yet, the librarians of the New York Public Library claim that his papers, deposited in the Manuscripts Division are among the most heavily used of any of the collections. The explanation for this apparent anomaly lies in Cockran's background role as an ideologist, position paper writer, fluent articulator, trusted aide, but rarely if ever a prime mover.

Cockran's political career warrants study for a number of reasons. He participated in the mainstream of American life, involving himself in some of the most pressing issues of the time. In varying degree he had close political relationships with Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, William L. Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred E. Smith and John Kelly, Richard Croker and Charles

⁶ New York Sun, March 1, 1923, p. 1; New York Times, March 2, 1923, p. 5.

Murphy of Tammany Hall. He carried on a vast correspondence with many of the most prominent leaders, thinkers, writers and artists of the day. His speeches reveal a comprehensive knowledge of a wide variety of subjects particularly economics and constitutional law. A striking parallel exists between the problems of Cockran's America with those of today. The growing complexities of city life and the implications of American involvement in international affairs forced men to reexamine and reassess their traditional beliefs and values in order to adapt to the new demands and to produce viable solutions.

Three works which directly concern Cockran exist. Robert McElroy, the American historian, collected what he thought were the most important addresses of Cockran and published them under the title In the Name of Liberty.⁷ Interpretation, narrative and historical setting are ignored. James McGurrin's biography Bourke Cockran: A Free Lance in American Politics is eulogistic, uncritical and undocumented, although based on the Cockran papers.⁸ It lacks historical perspective and the framework in which Cockran operated.

⁷ Robert McElroy ed. (William Bourke Cockran), In the Name of Liberty: Selected Addresses (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925).

⁸ James McGurrin, Bourke Cockran: A Free Lance in American Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

The one study which has any scholarly value is Mother Mary Margaret Crowley's dissertation, "Bourke Cockran, Orator," written under the auspices of the Speech Department at the University of Wisconsin in 1941. Mother Crowley was more concerned with Cockran's oratory than his political career although she narrated chronologically the sequence of events in which he participated. Except for those who are interested in Cockran as a speech maker the study is not of historical value.⁹

The aim of this paper is to explore Cockran's political life through his letters, speeches, writings and activities separated from the flamboyance of his rhetoric. Although this writer hopes to discover a political ideology and group of principles which formed the foundation of Cockran's behavior she would like to determine a balanced evaluation of Cockran's achievements. In summary, the purposes of this thesis are to determine:

1. Cockran's contributions to the political and economic development of the United States;
2. Cockran's role in relation to the political events at the time;
3. The ideological principles by which Cockran lived;

⁹Mother Mary Margaret Crowley, "Bourke Cockran, Orator" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1941).

4. Whether Cockran compromised principles for political advantage or did his political flexibility reflect a consistency in values:
5. Whether Cockran's contemporaries who shared his opinions and attitudes made similar political accommodations.

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND YOUTH

On a spring day in 1871, the steamship England docked in New York harbor. Among its passengers stood William Bourke Cockran, a tall, grey eyed youth of seventeen, of large build, with a "huge" head. He was met by Edward Martin of New York City, a wealthy cousin.¹ Although he had come for only a short visit, Cockran remained in America and became an American citizen. In the next few years he studied law and entered politics; starting a long and brilliant public career.

William Bourke Cockran, born in County Sligo February 28, 1854, came from a distinguished old Irish family.² His father,

¹McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 19; William Bourke Papers, New York Public Library. A passport description of March 19, 1895 pictures Cockran as heavy set, five feet eleven inches tall, dark hair and dark complexion. In later years Cockran became quite grey; "The Reminiscences of George W. Alger" (3 vols. Oral History Research, Columbia University, 1952), I, 152; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

²McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 3. The name Cockran is derived from the old Gaelic clan Corcoran or O'Corcorain. It is uncertain when the spelling changed; Richard B. Morris, "William Bourke Cockran," in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds. The Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), IV, 256.

Martin Cockran, had been born in 1825 in the village of Ballinacarrow, County Sligo. Martin's father, Tom, a learned proprietor of a large farm, had held the position of Mayor of Ballinacarrow.³

Cockran's mother, Harriet Knight White, came from a prominent County Limerick family. Her mother, Susan Knight, of Brickfields, had married Michael Bourke-White of Balinvirick. He had the distinction of being foreman of the County Limerick grand jury. Members of the County's ruling families served on these juries and the foremen were individuals of high esteem, similar to that of Commodore in the British Royal Yacht Squadron. Harriet's family had long been active in public affairs. John Bourke of Cahirmoyle, County Limerick, one of her ancestors, had served in King James' Parliament of 1689 but during William the Third's reign his large estates had been confiscated. Harriet's maternal grand-uncle, Sir Christopher Knight, had fought alongside General James Wolfe as aide-de-camp at the Battle of Quebec during the French and Indian War.⁴

Harriet Knight White, a woman of wealth and education had

³Mother Mary Margaret Crowley, "Bourke Cockran, Orator," p. 2.

⁴McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 4-5. In the United States, another of Harriet's relatives, Edward Douglas White, had distinguished himself as a Confederate soldier in the American Civil War and served as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court between 1910 and 1921.

married the handsome Martin Cockran, in Dublin, after a one week courtship. She was thirty-six and he twenty-three. Martin was well educated, extravagant, and a spendthrift, with a great passion for horses. His reputation throughout the county stemmed from his daring exploits as a horseman. Although she had been baptized as a Protestant, Harriet White became a Catholic after her marriage to Martin Cockran.⁵

The couple had five children. William Bourke, the third son, had three brothers, Thomas, Martin and Christopher and one sister, Susan.⁶ Bourke was only five years old when Martin died from injuries sustained by a fall from his horse. Harriet, undaunted, straightened out her financial obligations and moved into the town of Sligo in 1862.⁷

At the age of nine, after spending a year at the local school of the Christian Brothers, Bourke Cockran left for France to attend the Institute des Petit Freres de Marie at Beauchamp, near Lille. During the five years he spent there, the young scholar won

⁵McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 4-6, Cockran recalled how "ardently" his mother had attached herself to her new religion, and would have liked him to become a priest. Nevertheless, he said, she permitted him to make his own choice.

⁶Ibid, p. 6.

⁷Mother Mary Margaret Crowley, "Bourke Cockran, Orator," p. 3.

distinction as a brilliant student in French culture and liberal arts. In a relatively short time he had learned to speak French fluently.⁸ While at Beauchamp, Bourke's older brother, Martin, joined him. At the end of the year, Martin went home for a holiday but shortly after his arrival in Ireland he contracted diphtheria and died within a few days. Later, looking back to these early years, Cockran often related how his Marist teachers had helped him through his grief and won his confidence and affection. When Cockran finally left the institute, he did so with regret.⁹

By the time Bourke returned home his mother had moved to Dublin. He then entered St. Jarlath's College at Tuam, County Galway, Ireland,¹⁰ Afterwards, he attended Summerhill College in Athlone, where he won highest honors in Latin and Greek and as one of his classmates, Bishop Clancy of Elphin, later recalled, "astonished his teachers by the brilliancy of his wit and versatility of his genius." After leaving Summerhill, Cockran yielded to his mother's wishes and went to Dublin to be coached for a position with the Imperial Department of Woods and Forests in India. He soon learned

⁸New York Times, January 8, 1898, p. 17.

⁹Cockran, Speech for the Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Marist Order, 1916, Cockran MSS.; New York Public Library.

¹⁰New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

that he was more interested in law and politics.¹¹

Oratory had attracted Cockran's attention at the early age of sixteen. When in Dublin, he had joined a society of young men which met every Sunday afternoon to debate numerous subjects, among them ethics and politics. The young Irishman quickly demonstrated unusual talent in public speaking. The first time Cockran addressed the society he was as much surprised at his gifts as his audience. The County Sligo historian, Archdeacon O'Rorke, knew the Cockran family well, and wrote of the young orator's first triumph, "he was not long in Dublin when it became known to his friends and probably to himself that he had received from nature the rare and precious gift of genuine eloquence."¹²

Cockran's decision to turn to politics and law can be traced to his great admiration for Isaac Butt a well known orator, lawyer, member of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the British House of Commons and founder of the Home Rule movement.¹³ Harriet tried to dissuade her son from pursuing the legal profession. She considered it an uncertain means of earning a livelihood, requiring too

¹¹McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 17-18.

¹²T. O'Rorke, D.D., M.R.I.A., The History of Sligo, Town and Country (2 vols., Dublin: James Duff and Company, undated), cited in Mother Mary M. Crowley, "Bourke Cockran, Orator," p. 3; McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 18.

¹³McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 18.

much money in preparation for an insecure career. She tried to elicit Archdeacon O'Rorke's help in getting a position for her son with a London stock broker. Before anything could be accomplished, Bourke announced that he had decided to go to the United States to visit Robert Morrison, a close friend of his father.¹⁴ Cockran had read about the country and was curious to see it and judge its merits for himself. Harriet thought the trip would be a "wild adventure" and felt certain that her son would return after a short stay. She arranged to send one hundred and twenty-five pounds to her cousin, Edward Martin, to provide for Cockran's expenses in New York. Within six weeks after his arrival Cockran had made up his mind to remain in America.¹⁵

The young Irishman explored New York City and wrote to his mother of his impressions. He noted the disparity between the poor and the rich. Because of the preconceptions about American wealth, Cockran was bewildered by the socio-economic contrasts that he

¹⁴McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 19; "The Reminiscences of George W. Alger," I, 152. Alger indicates that the friend's name was Morrison.

¹⁵McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 19. Cockran returned to Ireland in 1875 as a reporter for the New York Herald to attend the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of O'Connell's (the Irish "liberator") birth and to witness the unveiling of his statue. Bourke Cockran returned to Ireland again in 1883 to visit his mother in Rathmines one year before her death; "The Reminiscences of George W. Alger," I, 152. Cockran visited Robert Morrison the first day he arrived in New York. Morrison, who was born in Ireland, was a linen merchant.

observed. Notwithstanding his observations, he marvelled at the apparent freedom in the United States.¹⁶

There are differences of opinion about Cockran's first employment.¹⁷ All sources, however, agree that he taught Latin and French at St. Theresa's Academy on Rutgers Street in New York City as one of his earliest jobs. He soon left the city, however, and moved to Tuckahoe, New York, where he spent two and one half years as principal of the public school.¹⁸

One evening, in Mt. Vernon, New York, Cockran gave a lecture on the moral influence of the drama. Abraham B. Tappan, justice of the New York State Supreme Court, impressed with the young man's manner and speaking style, advised him to study law and offered him the use of his own private law library. Cockran

¹⁶ McGurrian, Bourke Cockran, pp. 21-22.

¹⁷ Mother Mary Margaret Crowley, "Bourke Cockran, Orator," pp. 9-10; McGurrian, Bourke Cockran, p. 21; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17. In her dissertation, Mother Crowley says that Cockran took a job at A. T. Stewart's dry goods store in New York City. She cites a reprinted interview in the Tribune of an article from the Philadelphia Press as her source. New York Times indicates that he took the position at the store but that the "place" was "bigger than I could fill" and was fired or at least eased out of the position. McGurrian maintains that Cockran heard of the opening but never called to fill it. McGurrian says that the newspaper articles are misleading but he does not indicate how he knows that. There is no evidence in the Cockran papers that the accounts are incorrect.

¹⁸ New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

accepted.¹⁹ He taught school both in New York and Westchester and studied law at his leisure, he told a New York Times reporter in an interview in 1893. On September 15, 1876, Cockran passed his bar examination in New York City.²⁰

Cockran began the practice of law in Mt. Vernon, New York. From the beginning, personal misfortune struck him. He contracted diphtheria while boarding with a family named Jackson. Their daughter, Mary, a former pupil of the young lawyer, helped nurse him back to health. He fell in love with her and soon they were married. Within a year, Mary died in childbirth. Cockran, at twenty-two, was left a widower and childless.²¹

In the spring of 1878, on the advice of Judge Tappan, Cockran opened a law office in New York City at 178 Broadway

¹⁹ McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 30.

²⁰ New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17; Affidavit, in Cockran MSS.

²¹ McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 31; Richard B. Morris, "William Bourke Cockran," in Dictionary of American Biography, II, 257. She was the sister of Rev. Father Jackson of St. Anne's Church, New York City.

between Maiden Lane and John Street.²² He became a member of the Hyena Club, a literary society, which encouraged debates, a pursuit close to Cockran's heart. He enjoyed himself too much. He spent a great deal of time not only in discussions but in drinking alcohol. His authorized biographer, James McGurrin, relates that Cockran's clients began to desert him one by one because he neglected his practice. One morning following an "unusually convivial evening," says McGurrin, Cockran failed to appear at his office and lost an important prospect. On the same day he had lunch with a friend, Ambrose Purdy, who had not been able to resist drink himself. McGurrin relates that Purdy turned to Cockran and with great sincerity said:

Bourke Cockran, a bountiful God has given you great gifts, a brilliant intellect, a sterling character, an eloquent tongue, and you seem determined to throw them all away. You are on the threshold of a great future. Honor, wealth and fame are yours to command if you have the will to give up your drinking habits. You can choose between the gutter and the heights

²²Trow's New York City Directory, 1879 (New York: The Trow City Directory Company, 1879), p. 262. He maintained his residence at Mt. Vernon.; McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 33.; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17. The paper reports that Cockran did not come to live in the city until the winter of 1880-1881.

in a way that is given to few men.²³

Cockran paused, "looked at the glass of wine, lifted it, and replaced it on the table untasted," writes McGurrin. Cockran never touched a drop of intoxicating liquor again for thirty years.²⁴

After this incident, good fortune came to Cockran. Between 1878 and 1885 his legal practice grew and prospered. In the middle 1880's he moved his office to 131 Temple Court near Liberty and Thames Street, New York City.²⁵ With the increased affluence he had taken on a partner, William H. Clark, who later became corporation counsel under Mayor Hugh J. Grant. Cockran's home at 96 Fifth Avenue located near 15th Street reflected the wealth which he had begun to acquire.²⁶ In January 1885, Mayor Franklin Edson offered him the post of corporation counsel, formerly held by William C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy in the cabinet of

²³ McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 35, 37. McGurrin says that Mrs. Cockran asked him to write this biography of Cockran. Although she died before the work was completed, during the years that he carried on his research she told him many anecdotes which are not in the New York Public Library Cockran Manuscripts.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁵ Cockran changed his office address several times. In 1882 the director listed his office at 128 Broadway, and his home at Grand Union. Trow's New York City Directory, 1882 (New York: The Trow City Directory Company, 1882), p. 289.; In 1885 his address was changed to 134 Temple Court and his home to 96 Fifth Avenue. Ibid., 1885, p. 305.; In 1886 his new office was at 131 Temple Court. Ibid., 1886, p. 332.

²⁶ Ibid., 1885, p. 305.; McGurrin, Bourke Cockran. pp. 89, 94.

President Cleveland. Cockran turned down the offer because his practice consumed too much time. While his cases included both civil and criminal law, he devoted most of his efforts to civil suits. In a few short years he had gained a reputation as a leading authority in financial and corporation law. Among his clients could be found such men as Joseph Pulitzer, the publisher of the New York World.²⁷ While Cockran's legal career seemed destined for success, it would be his political activities and his great oratorical gifts which would bring him both national and international fame.

²⁷ McGurkin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 89, 94.; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.; Mother Mary Crowley, "Cockran, Orator," p. 12. She relates from the Times, March 3, 1923 and Bascom N. Timmons of the Dallas Herald, March 10, 1923, how Charles Straus, one of Cockran's associates had turned a case over to him when he first came to New York, with the remark that if he could win it, he would have a practice of \$20,000 a year. Cockran lost the case but had handled the summation for the defense so well that he not only worked for Straus for a while but the judge in the case, impressed, addressed Cockran as "judge."; Cockran MSS., New York Public Library. Letterheads in 1886 include Clark's name as a partner. In 1886 his office address was at 38 Park Row in the Potter Building.

CHAPTER II

NEW YORK POLITICS-TAMMANY AND COCKRAN 1878-1889

When he came to New York City in 1878 to establish his law practice, Cockran found the Democratic party in shambles, torn by factionalism and discord. Some Democratic groups even collaborated with Republicans against each other. The party's problems grew out of the personal animosities between Samuel J. Tilden, leader of the New York Democratic machine, and "Honest" John Kelly, Tammany boss. In the mid 1870's Kelly had helped Tilden oust William Marcy Tweed from leadership of Tammany, and, in conjunction with Hugh McLaughlin, the leader of King's county, brought in great majorities for Tilden in the gubernatorial election of 1874 and the presidential election of 1876.¹ Notwithstanding this apparent harmony, the unity of the Democrats gradually disintegrated so that by the end of the

¹Roscoe C. E. Brown of Ray B. Smith, ed., History of the State of New York: Political and Governmental (6 vols. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, Inc., 1922), III, 162-163. (Hereafter referred to as R. C. E. Brown, History of New York); David M. Ellis, James A. Frost, Harold C. Syrett and Harry J. Carman, A Short History of New York State (New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 361-362; Alfred Connable and Edward Silberfarb, Tigers of Tammany: Nine Men Who Ran New York (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 178-179, 190.

1870's two major organizations represented the Democrats; Tammany Hall, headed by Kelly, and Irving Hall, the anti-Tammany faction run by supporters of Tilden.²

During the years between 1878 and 1889, William Bourke Cockran changed from a disparaging observer of Tammany to become one of its most ardent and loyal partisans. Essentially a moral man with high ideals about responsibilities of political leadership in a democracy, Cockran's first exposure to the New York machines filled him with disgust. The fragmentation of the Democratic party puzzled him but its unsavory deals appalled him. His sense of outrage against Tammany in particular prompted him to support Irving Hall candidates. In 1879 Cockran "stumped" the State for the reelection of Governor Lucius Robinson, the Democratic nominee backed by Irving Hall.³

²Cockran to General L. B. Faulkner, chairman of the Democratic State Committee, "For Mr. Dana: The People vs. Politicians," an appeal to the chairman of the Democratic State Committee--The National Democracy Undermined by Factional Disputes in New York City. January 12, 1881, (hereafter referred to as Cockran to Faulkner "Disputes," Cockran MSS.; R. C. E. Brown, History of New York, III, 178, 180-183, 211-212. On September 15, 1875 John Morrissey of New York City appeared with a delegation of anti-Tammany representatives at the Democratic State Convention. Morrissey's group became the Irving Hall Democrats. During the same year Morrissey carried on a war against Tammany in the election for the Senate and won against the Tammany candidate. In 1876 when Tilden lost the presidential election, Kelly worked diligently to control the Democratic party by attacking the loser. With the split between Kelly and himself accomplished Tilden joined Irving Hall and replaced Morrissey as its leader in 1877; Connable and Silberfarb, Tigers of Tammany, pp. 191-192. Among the leaders of Irving Hall were Edward Cooper, son of Peter; Abram Hewitt, the iron manufacturer and William C. Whitney, the financier and surface railway owner.

³New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.; Cockran to M. E. Driscoll, October 3, 1922, Cockran MSS. Cockran did not attend the convention which renominated Robinson.

Recalling this election two years later, Cockran attacked Tammany boss John Kelly for undermining Robinson's prospects of victory by bolting the Syracuse convention and maneuvering his own nomination for the governorship, thus widening the split in the party.⁴ Cockran asserted that Kelly's "personal pride" and "vengeance" contributed to the crushing defeat of Robinson and the overwhelming victory of Republican Alonzo B. Cornell.⁵

Party conflict was not confined to local and State contests but also presented a serious problem on the national scene. The split between the Democratic factions appeared irreparable when John Kelly refused to support Tilden as the party's choice for the Presidency in 1880. When Tilden removed himself from the contest at the Cincinnati Democratic convention in June, however, the rift was temporarily healed.⁶ Cockran assailed not only Kelly but William C. Whitney, the street railway tycoon, for duplicity in engineering Tilden's withdrawal. Cockran accused Whitney, who had been very active at the convention, of promising patronage to those who would drop their

⁴ New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.; Matthew Breen, Thirty Years of New York Politics (New York: Matthew Breen, 1899), p. 586. Kelly polled over 70,000 votes thereby splitting the Democratic vote and throwing the election to Alonzo Cornell.; New York Times, September 4, 1880, p. 4. The editor attributed Republican victory to the growing discontent among the "independent" intelligent voters who refused to back Tammany choices.; Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS.

⁵ Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS.

⁶ Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 591-592, 600-601.

pledges to Tilden and support General Winfield Scott Hancock.⁷

Despite Cockran's accusations Tilden's withdrawal must be attributed to a number of other factors. His popularity had declined markedly since 1876. He showed signs of old age and loss of health. Matthew Breen wrote in Thirty Years of New York Politics that the former governor had contributed to the party's decline through lack of personal magnetism and the ability to excite enthusiasm among the voters. Tilden must have been conscious of these factors because he declined offers to run again in 1884.⁸

The success of Hancock in New York State would depend largely on New York City's local elections. If the Democrats could

⁷ Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS. Cockran accused Whitney and Kelly of using "political assassination" against Tilden.

⁸ Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 592-593. When elected Governor of New York in 1874, Tilden received a Democratic majority of 50,317, in 1876 as presidential candidate his majority in the State was only 26,688. In 1877 the majority was 11,264 while in 1878 it came to 34,661. See John Bigelow, The Life of Samuel Tilden (2 vols. New York: Harper and Bros., 1895), II, 281-285.; Mark David Hirsch, William C. Whitney: Modern Warwick (New York: Mead Company, 1948), p. 155. Whitney, before the convention, had tried to find out Tilden's position on the candidacy. On May 17th Tilden, Whitney and Speaker Samuel J. Randall met. Tilden admitted that he might have to withdraw and it would be better for him to face that possibility so that he could influence the nomination of others for that place. He gave Whitney and Randall the right to withdraw his name when the circumstances dictated it.; R. C. E. Brown, The History of New York, III, 248. Tilden's silence had encouraged other candidates. Though New York was committed to Tilden, rumors of ill health and his conflict with Kelly made the delegates restive. Manning had in his possession a letter from Tilden which disclosed that the Presidency might require too much of him.; Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage (New York; Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932), p. 146. In 1884 Tilden suffered a paralytic stroke.

deliver a large vote, Hancock could carry the State and win. Events unfortunately turned against them. Tammany and Irving Hall had agreed on local candidates, including William E. Grace for mayor. Kelly accepted Grace about whom the New York Times wrote, "would best serve as a figure-head for the Tammany boss." The election of Grace would mean that Kelly would remain at the head of the finance department and his control over all city agencies would be restored.⁹

During the subsequent campaign however, the candidacy of Grace contributed to the defeat of Hancock. A week before election day it became known that Grace was a Roman Catholic. Republicans took advantage of this and exploited Protestant fears of Catholic influence in the public schools. The Republicans emphasized the dangers of such an occurrence, as if Grace had secret plans to convert the New York City schools into religious institutions. A large number of Protestant Democrats threw their support to the opposition. Although Grace won, James Garfield, the Republican Presidential candidate, carried the city and the State by 20,000 votes.¹⁰ Cockran blamed both Irving Hall and Tammany for the defeat because of secret deals they made with Republicans in order to save whatever political offices

⁹Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS.; New York Times, August 26, 1880, p. 4., October 1, 1880, p. 1., October 14, 1880, p. 3, October 19, 1880, p. 4.

¹⁰Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS. The Hancock vote in the city ran 20,000 short of the usual Democratic tallies while the Republican majorities up State remained stable.

they could in the city.¹¹ Tammany and Irving Hall accused each other of treachery. Kelly also accused the Republicans for placing obstacles in the way of Democratic citizens so that they would stay away from the polls.¹²

Unable to conceal his disdain for politicians, in 1881, Cockran wrote to L. B. Faulkner, chairman of the Democratic State Committee, of his dissatisfaction with the party's activities. Despite his criticism and a somewhat naive evaluation he offered suggestions to solve some of the difficulties. He advocated eliminating halls, committees and other organizations that immediately or potentially would lead to dissension within the party ranks. Voters, he said, must be taught that the sole aim of the Democracy was to alleviate conditions dangerous to all the people and not to support office holders, whether of a single party or of a coalition. Cockran proposed to Chairman Faulkner that all Democratic factions disband during the year to allow their animosities to subside and then come together to start a new organization.¹³

¹¹ Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS. Seven offices with political patronage were involved.

¹² New York Times, November 7, 1880, p. 6.; Breen, Thirty Years, p. 620. Breen wrote that the Republicans were determined to reduce the Democratic majorities in the two Democratic strongholds in New York, Brooklyn and New York City. They were aided by John I. Davenport, the Federal supervisor of elections, who used his power to harass and place obstacles in the way of Democratic voters. Thousands of "illegal votes" were cast by imported individuals.

¹³ Cockran to Faulkner, "Disputes," Cockran MSS.

As the next few years would demonstrate, this was easier said than done. Disgusted with the tactics of Tammany Hall, a number of prominent anti-Tammany Democrats, among them William C. Whitney, Abram Hewitt, the iron manufacturer, and Edward Cooper, mayor between 1879 and 1880, formed a third Democratic faction. At first referred to as the committee of one hundred they soon came to be known as the County Democracy.¹⁴ Cockran remained with Irving Hall and helped in its reorganization.¹⁵

In 1881, Cockran made his first politically noteworthy appearance. As the State Convention convened on October 11, 1881, in Albany to nominate a gubernatorial candidate, there were three sets of delegations from New York City. Much to the chagrin of the two older factions, the County Democracy received recognition as the regular delegation.¹⁶ As the spokesman for Irving Hall, Cockran denounced the decision. He spoke with the "terrible sarcasm" for which he would be noted, aiming most of his invective against William C. Whitney, leader of the County Democracy. Daniel Manning, future

¹⁴ Allan Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt: With Some Account of Peter Cooper (New York: Harper Bros, 1935), pp. 437. Abram Hewitt was chairman. A sub-committee of 21 was appointed to draw up a plan for the regeneration of the New York Democracy. In August, 1881, a final proposal was presented; Cockran to Faulkner "Disputes," Cockran MSS.; New York Times, January 13, 1881, p. 5., March 24, 1881, p. 8.

¹⁵ New York Times, August 16, 1881, p. 2.; Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 167.

¹⁶ Breen, Thirty Years, p. 673.; New York Times, October 18, 1881, p. 8.

State Democratic leader, incensed by Cockran's audacity, wanted to stop him but Whitney, intrigued by the young Irishman's manner and oratory, instructed Manning not to interfere. Despite Cockran's plea for recognition, the Irving Hall delegation was thrown out of the convention.¹⁷

As Bourke Cockran became increasingly involved with Irving Hall's affairs, he fell victim to the very practices which earlier he had found reprehensible. Opposed as he might have been to party divisiveness, he could not help but participate in the disputes because of his sense of loyalty to his group. Despite his principles, he had to succumb to political practicalities. Many times in his life Cockran had to grapple with the conflict between his loyalties, principles, and the exigencies of the moment. Perhaps this is why he would often be accused of being an opportunist and lacking in conviction.

The Syracuse gubernatorial nominating convention of September, 1882 provided Cockran with his first opportunity to take a leading, although somewhat uncomfortable, role. Major contenders for the governorship were Roswell P. Flower, the New York City banker, Waldo Hutchins of Westchester County, Grover Cleveland of Buffalo

¹⁷Albany Argus, October 11, 1881; New York World, October 12, 1881; New York Tribune, October 12th and 13th, 1881; New York Times, January 8, 1908, in Mark Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 169.

and Henry Slocum of Brooklyn, Cleveland enjoyed the backing of both Tammany and the County Democracy. Irving Hall, on the other hand, threw its support to Flower.¹⁸ Cockran had the unenviable task of trying to turn the convention to Flower's favor. No sooner did Cockran rise to promote his candidate than Cleveland sympathizers tried to shout him down with hisses, cat calls and cries of "sit down." Cockran refused to be intimidated and replied to the hecklers with, "no I will not sit down, not if all the labelled chattels of the County Democracy shout themselves hoarse." Despite his valiant efforts Cockran could not sway the delegates to Flower. Cleveland was nominated on the third ballot.¹⁹

Shortly before the November election, the city Democrats held a meeting at which Cockran spoke as a representative, once again, for Irving Hall. He agreed with Cleveland that the contest of 1882 was only, "the skirmish line which preceded the real struggle of 1884." Still hoping for a united party, Cockran urged the three Democratic organizations to join to support the state ticket.²⁰ His pleas fell

¹⁸ New York Times, September 23, 1882, p. 4.; Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 676-681.

¹⁹ McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 49.; Kelly noticed Cockran at the State convention in 1882 and even though Cockran had been critical of the old man, the Tammany leader invited him to have a talk and even to join the Wigwam. Cockran did not accept at this time. A number of speeches Cockran made in support of Cleveland during the campaign were sponsored by the Tammany organization says James McGurrin.; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 103-104.

²⁰ New York Times, October 14, 1882, p. 5.

upon deaf ears.

The split continued after Cleveland became governor. One of the reasons for this continuing disaffection can be traced to Daniel Manning, the inheritor of Tilden's leadership in the State organization. The Governor, however, made appointments in the early months with men of ability rather than those to whom he owed political debts.²¹ The Democrats blamed Manning for Cleveland's oversights and in September, 1883, the New York Times criticized Manning for ignoring such simple precepts of politics as rewarding members of the party for their efforts in bringing in the votes. The newspaper said that as a proprietor of the Albany Argus, the official Democratic journal, and as chairman of the Democratic State Committee, Manning had wielded great power, but unfortunately with divisiveness. Committeemen throughout the State expressed dissatisfaction with his tactics.²²

John Kelly provided yet another impediment to the party's solidarity. After Cleveland took office, the Tammany boss resented

²¹ Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 113-114.

²² New York Times, September 2, 1883, p. 1. Roswell Flower aided the attacks on the Cleveland group in Albany. He was still smarting from his failure to get the gubernatorial nomination. If the Manning-Cleveland machine could be rebuked, Flower felt his own ambitions might have a better chance in the future. Committeemen such as McCune of Buffalo, Lodewick of Troy and Faulkner of Livingston County intrigued with Flower. Flower was bound to fail against the powerful Manning organization., September 18, 1883, p. 1, September 23, 1883, p. 8.

being ignored by Manning and even by Cleveland. He made his antagonism so overt that the New York Times took the old Tammany leader to task for his selfishness and lack of interest in the public good. In contrast to the New York City boss, the paper pointed out Cleveland's "honesty" and "independence" of any machine bosses. As for Manning, the Times dismissed him as a mere political opportunist who functioned in the usual capacity of a political journalist and without any principles.²³

At the height of this struggle, Cockran decided to leave Irving Hall. If he wanted to remain in the political arena he would have to choose between the County Democracy and Tammany Hall. He had been hostile to both factions but had begun to admire John Kelly of Tammany and something of a friendship was developing between the two. Kelly had approached Cockran earlier to become a member of the Hall, but he had refused. Kelly had asked him to make speeches on a number of occasions and Cockran complied. One of them was an impassioned anti-boss oration. The Tammany leader was responsible for the young Irishman's appointment as counsel to the Sheriff in

²³New York Times, September 23, 1883, p. 8.; Breen, Thirty Years, p. 688. Kelly also resented Cleveland because the Governor had insisted at the nominating convention in 1883 that Isaac H. Maynard be named as Secretary of State in place of William Purcell the rank and file of Tammany wanted to renominate for a second term. Cleveland also "requested" of Kelly that State Senator Thomas F. Grady, an outspoken opponent of the Governor, not be renominated for the next legislative session. Kelly had to concede.; Connable and Silverfarb, Tigers of Tammany, p. 194.

September of 1883.²⁴ One can only speculate about Cockran's choice of the Tammany organization over the County Democracy because the reason behind this part of his decision is not clear. The latter organization had been in existence for almost one hundred years. Under Kelly, Tammany power had grown and was influential in State and city politics, controlling a large part of the city's patronage as well as the most important elective offices. Run by the Irish, it also controlled a large part of the Irish vote. For a young orator of Irish descent, full of political ambition, Cockran might have reasoned that a twofold advantage presented itself, one for Tammany and the other for himself. To Tammany, as a lawyer, and through his eloquence, he could give the polish which the organization badly needed. For Cockran, Tammany could become the assurance of political ascendancy and the path to fame.

William Bourke Cockran joined Tammany Hall in January, 1884. Despite his friendship and admiration for Kelly, Cockran delivered a maiden speech which attacked the evils of boss rule. Specifically, he singled out legislators who promoted such political control and pointed to the New York State bill which proposed to take from the New York City aldermen the power of confirming appointments made by the mayor. Cockran declared that such a proposal would give too much power to the mayor because of his control over the Board of Estimate, thus promoting "autocratic government."²⁵

²⁴McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 50.; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

²⁵New York Times, January 27, 1884, p. 2.

The year 1884 also signalled Cockran's introduction as a major political orator with national fame. Kelly brought Cockran to the Democratic National Convention at Chicago because he believed that the assemblage could be persuaded, through the young man's oratory to nominate Senator Allan G. Thurman of Ohio for the Presidency rather than Governor Cleveland.²⁶

On the first day of the session, Cockran attempted to thwart the Cleveland forces by his refusal to support a unit rule resolution which provided that the whole vote of a State delegation be cast according to the decision of its majority. On ideological grounds, he objected because the unit rule tended to stifle opposition. He said it was a party tactic to "pervert" rather than permit full debate. Moreover, he interpreted the resolution as a violation of the decision of the New York State convention, which he had attended, to send uncommitted delegates to Chicago.²⁷

On the second day Kelly asked Cockran, who was a delegate, to speak against Cleveland. Just before the orator rose, the convention

²⁶ Cockran to M. E. Driscoll, October 3, 1922, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

²⁷ Democratic Party National Convention, Official Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention: 1884 (Chicago: July 8-11, 1884), pp. 18-20, 38-39. (Hereafter referred to as Democratic Convention, Proceedings); New York Times, June 19, 1884, p. 1, June 20, 1884, p. 4. Tammany had opposed Cleveland at the June, 1884 Saratoga State convention. Cleveland forces were triumphant but in order to keep peace Tammany (and Irving Hall) agreed to go to Chicago if the Cleveland people would agree to an uninstructed delegation. They did.

ruled that any speeches opposing Cleveland were out of order. Those who wished to address the members would have to nominate candidates of their own choice or second the nominees already before the convention. In his seconding speech for Thurman Cockran challenged the judgment of the convention in asking the delegates to support Cleveland as a "plunge in the dark, to subject the future fortunes of our party to the hazards of a lottery, to thrust our hands into a bag and bring out an unknown number."²⁸ He denied any personal animosity against Cleveland as a private citizen but stated he had doubts about the Governor's "mental qualifications" for the office of President. Further, he believed that the nominee was a captive candidate and would be a "puppet of the gentlemen who have managed to capture the majority of the New York delegation." Cockran doubted whether Cleveland could carry New York State. On the other hand, Allan G. Thurman, Cockran assured his audience, had proven himself to be a statesman in whom the people had confidence. In a melodramatic finish Cockran shouted, "the shoulders of Mr. Cleveland cannot uphold that ample mantle, the shoulders of Allan G. Thurman can fill every crease, every fold and every part of that garment."²⁹

Other members of the Tammany delegation delivered personal attacks against Cleveland and accused him of being an enemy of the

²⁸ Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 1884, p. 136.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

Irish and a Puritan who was out to destroy the Catholic influence in the land.³⁰ At one stage of the proceedings when the vote was to be taken, Kelly, Thomas Grady and Cockran brought into the galleries numbers of uninvited quests to create a disturbance, and to shout down the speakers favoring the opposition.³¹ The next day, despite obstructionist tactics from Tammany, Cleveland won the nomination on the second ballot with 683 votes to Thomas F. Bayard's 81-1/2, Thomas A. Hendrick's 45-1/2 and Thurman's 4.³²

Cockran and his friends returned to New York unhappy, but reconciled to the need for the Democrats to present a common front if they wished to win in November. Setting aside personal animosities, Tammany Hall declared Grover Cleveland to be the best candidate to unseat the Republicans. Tammany formally accepted Cleveland as its candidate on September 13, 1884. Cockran, speaking for the organization said that it was the duty for the Democrats to support Cleveland. He told Tammany members that nobody had opposed the Governor's nomination more than he but the need to oust the present administration in Washington made it imperative for Democrats to unite.³³

³⁰ Breen, Thirty Years, p. 691.; Rexford Guy Tugwell, Grover Cleveland (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 83.; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 149.

³¹ Tugwell, Cleveland, p. 84.; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 150-153.

³² Breen, Thirty Years, p. 694.; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 154.; R. C. E. Brown, The History of New York, III, 306.

³³ New York Times, September 13, 1884, p. 1.

Cleveland won the election with an electoral vote of 219 to his Republican opponent James G. Blaine's 182 and a popular vote of 4,912,696 to Blaine's 4,149,680. Cleveland carried New York State, but with less than 1200 votes.³⁴

Among the factors which contributed to Cleveland's victory was the support of the Mugwumps, an independent group of Eastern upper and middle class Republican business men and professionals. When the Republicans nominated Blaine the Mugwumps bolted and joined the Cleveland forces. They wished to see two major changes in the administration of government; a more efficient public service and the elimination of the spoils system to be achieved through civil service reform. Cleveland represented the means to this end.³⁵

³⁴ Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 187.; R. C. E. Brown, History of New York State, III, 310.; Cleveland might not have carried New York had it not been for an unfortunate misunderstanding about Blaine. A number of clergymen met with Blaine at which time Reverend S. D. Burchard, a Presbyterian minister, referred to the Democrats as a party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion." Blaine failed to criticize the remark. Within a few hours every major city in New York received the news with the implication that Blaine had agreed with Burchard. The incident cost Blaine the Irish, Roman Catholic and labor votes and the New York State electoral count. See, Hirsch, William C. Whitney, pp. 241-242.; Oscar Strauss, Under Four Administrations: From Cleveland to Taft (Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1922), pp. 38-39; Horace Samuel Merrill, Bourbon Leader: Grover Cleveland and the Democratic Party (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1957), p. 69. Merrill says that the Democrats had been looking for every dent in the Republican armor. "Bourbonism and Tammanyism had narrowed their opportunities." Mugwump support, practiced Democratic skill in managing city machines and attacks on Republican corruption "plutocracy and nativism, turned the trick," writes Merrill.

³⁵ Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 156-157, 160-162. Cleveland forces revealed a set of letters which exposed Blaine's investments as being "irregular" while Speaker of the House of Representatives, and

While civil service gathered an increasing number of advocates, Cockran interpreted its introduction as dangerous to popular government and to a large extent this explains his early hostility to Cleveland. Cockran had advocated some civil service reform but he believed that efficiency in public service depended upon the quality of the people in the individual jobs. Removals from employment, he said, ought to be carried on solely in the interest of the municipality.³⁶ Later, when Cockran became a member of Tammany he attacked the introduction of examinations into the public service. He thought that these tests would lead to an undemocratic bureaucratic aristocracy in the form of an independent and privileged coterie of office holders. He maintained that such a system as proposed by the reformers would diminish popular control of the public service, an essential element of republican government. He also feared that the new legislation would reduce and restrict the authority of elected officials. Cockran accused the proponents of the new system of being Anglophiles who wanted to create in America a permanent office holding class similar to that in England.³⁷ Despite these sentiments after Cleveland's inaugural

³⁶ Cockran to Dorman B. Eaton and Everett P. Wheeler, October 30, 1882, Cockran MSS.

³⁷ New York Times, July 3, 1885, p. 4. The Democratic party exposed itself to much criticism after Cleveland's election, specifically over the question of spoils. It angered both Tammany and the County Democracy. The dispute arose over who deserved cabinet office.; Bigelow, Tilden, II, 291. Bigelow writes that Tilden had recommended

address in March 1885, Cockran conceded that Cleveland might conceivably be capable of applying high principles and common sense to government. Later, in June, Cockran wished him good luck with his administrative measures.³⁸

By the time Cockran reached his thirty-second birthday he had achieved substantial political power in Tammany. When John Kelly died on June 1, 1886 the newspapers debated the possibilities that Cockran might become the new boss.³⁹ Cockran responded in

Daniel Manning as Secretary of Treasury to Cleveland but the latter accepted Manning reluctantly; The New York Sun, July 6, 1885, Cockran MSS. At the New York State Democratic convention during the summer, the party declared that tenure in public service jobs was undemocratic. They condemned competitive examination as cumbersome and expensive; New York Times September 12, 1885, p. 5; New York Sun, September 12, 1885, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, September 14, 1885, p. 4. Tammany, it reported, was not the only Democratic faction opposed to civil service reform. The County Democracy also objected but they did not do so as blatantly as the Wigwam; New York Sun, July 6, 1885, Cockran MSS. Cockran contributed resolutions on this matter before the Tammany organization. He did so subsequently at the September meeting. Ibid., September 12, 1885, Ibid.; New York Times, September 12, 1884, p. 5.

³⁸New York Times, March 14, 1885, p. 2; Cockran to Cleveland, June 8, 1885, Cleveland MSS. Library of Congress. Cockran asked Cleveland to present prizes at a convent in West Georgetown on the 25th of June.

³⁹The Morning Journal, June 27, 1885, Cockran MSS. In 1885 Cockran married Rhoda Mack, the daughter of John Mack, a wealthy New York merchant. The bride's father was reported to have a fortune estimated at \$2,000,000. The newspaper described Cockran as a tall, handsome, black mustached, bearded young man who was "probably the most eloquent and gifted speaker" in Tammany Hall.

surprise when asked whether he was in the running. He could not think of taking over leadership because, he declared, "the man to lead Tammany as Mr. Kelly did . . . "must be" some one whose means and position will enable him to sacrifice everything else and give his whole time and mind unselfishly and without trammels to Tammany's services as Mr. Kelly could and did."⁴⁰

Chosen by Tammany to deliver Kelly's eulogy, Cockran reflected his admiration for the old man when he referred to him as the "tribune" of the people and a man who had the genius to take from this society the best that it had to offer. To Cockran Kelly represented the "grand type of that self creation which is the glory of American manhood and the promise and the hope of American youth."⁴¹ He epitomized the prototype of the self-made man.

The Tammany organization required a special type of leader. The Committee of Twenty Four, which nominally controlled the organization and which consisted of one delegate from each district organization was subordinate to the boss. No one man had achieved dominance during the illness of Kelly who had during his leadership exerted a restraining influence and had directed with unusual skill. The organization worked from the center with a few strong individuals

⁴⁰The Daily Graphic, June 21, 1886, Ibid.

⁴¹Cockran, Eulogy on John Kelly, speech delivered at Tammany Hall on behalf of the Committee of Organization, June, 1886, Cockran MSS.

dictating the constitutions of local committees and the choice of district delegates. Patronage and jobs constituted the source of their power. Such an organization as Tammany, maintained the New York Times, required concentration of power, that is, a strong man who could harmonize all the factions within it.⁴²

After Kelly's death, control devolved upon four men, James J. Martin, Thomas F. Gilroy, William Bourke Cockran and Richard Croker. Of the four, Richard Croker, Fire Commissioner of New York City, had enjoyed the closest relationship with Kelly. Although he did not equal Kelly, Croker had served him and shared in the old man's confidences. When the boss retired because of illness in 1884, Croker carried on with the executive work, meting out orders.⁴³ The Hall was disintegrating.

Cockran, Gilroy and Martin made plans to restore Tammany's shattered fortunes. They prepared preambles and resolutions on every public topic. Cockran not only spoke publicly on these resolutions but also wrote most of them, particularly those designed to raise the spirits of the members. Matthew Breen, in his work, Thirty Years of New York Politics, observed that although Croker inherited the position as boss, he had as much to do with these plans and resolutions

⁴² New York Times, June 6, 1886, p. 8. (editorial).

⁴³ Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 763-764. Second in line, but close to the central control stood George Foster, Frederick Smyth, Hugh J. Grant and Henry D. Purroy.

as "the Man in the Moon." Croker, however, "looked wise."⁴⁴

Reflecting Cockran's political ascendancy, Tammany decided in 1886 to nominate him as its candidate from the twelfth Congressional district, to run against Republican George Hamilton Pell.⁴⁵ Cockran's candidacy drew generally good reactions. Roger Foster, a well known New York lawyer and a strong supporter of civil service reform, who resided in Cockran's district, pledged his aid. Foster wrote to Cockran:

I to-day was told that you were now likely to run; and was asked to aid in an attempt to defeat you on account of your opposition to the civil service law. I refused to do so. I now wish to assure you that, if there is any way in which I can aid you without direct opposition to Mr. Potter I hope you will call upon me. For although I am not an adherent of Tammany Hall; and am opposed to your position as regards the Civil Service Law; I know that you would honor the city of New York by representing it in Congress and that I should benefit the interests of both the Democratic party and the public at large by anything which I could do toward that result.⁴⁶

After Cockran had won his seat in Congress, another strong supporter, Charles Straus, the New York lawyer, wrote, "I considered your election a foregone conclusion, but nevertheless congratulate

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Breen, Thirty Years, 765-766.

⁴⁵ New York Times, October 20, 1886, p. 4., November 3, 1886, p. 1. Cockran won the election with a vote of 16,681 against Pell's 11,224.

⁴⁶ Roger Foster to Cockran, October 14, 1886, Cockran MSS. Potter had been proposed as a pro-civil service candidate.

you heartily upon your decisive majority. I think this is the proper field for you, and hope and believe that you will still accomplish greater things."⁴⁷

Despite the great enthusiasm for Cockran's new role, he accomplished little during his first term in Congress. In large part the failure was due to his concern for the fortunes of Tammany. This distraction brought him back to New York frequently. The position of Tammany had weakened. While the Wigwam and the County Democracy had joined forces to bring Abram Hewitt to victory in the 1886 mayoral election, Henry George of the United Labor Party had drawn a third of the Democratic votes.⁴⁸ Many New Yorkers regarded the Democrats with distrust and suspicion. Richard Croker, Tammany boss and Maurice J. Power, leader of the County Democracy inspired little hope for constructive change in New York City's political future.⁴⁹ Tammany's position appeared at best precarious but with the help of the Republicans the organization became powerfully entrenched. When the fall of 1888

⁴⁷ Charles Straus to Cockran, November 4, 1886, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁸ New York Times, October 15, 1886, p. 1; Connable and Silberfarb, Tigers of Tammany, pp. 204-205; Morris Robert Werner, Tammany Hall (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1928), pp. 311-312; New York Times, November 3, 1886, p. 1. Hewitt won with 90,199 votes, George received 67,581 and Theodore Roosevelt the Republican candidate polled 60,352. New York City lost a number of Democratic seats in the House of Representatives. There were 168 Democrats, 153 Republicans and three Laborites.

⁴⁹ New York Times, September 17, 1887, p. 4 (editorial).

election time approached the Country Democracy renominated Hewitt. Tammany refused to cooperate and instead proposed a Croker choice, Hugh J. Grant. Because Hewitt had antagonized the Irish by his refusal to review a St. Patrick's day parade, Grant captured their votes and the election. An even more significant factor responsible for his victory was the trade of votes between Croker and the boss of the Republican party, Thomas C. Platt. With Grant's victory Richard Croker emerged the real power of Tammany Hall.⁵⁰ While Cockran continued to hold top positions in the organization his main function became that of the orator and intellectual of the Wigwam. Although he did not attend the 1888 Democratic national convention in St. Louis, Cockran composed the Tammany endorsement of the convention's platform and designees, Grover Cleveland for the Presidency and Allen G. Thurman for Vice President.⁵¹

Cleveland lost to Republican Benjamin Harrison in the national election, but Tammany enjoyed a sweeping victory in New York City. New

⁵⁰Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 769-771. The paraders carried and waved the Irish flag. Hewitt considered this unconstitutional; Gustavus Myers, The History of Tammany Hall (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1917), pp. 270-271. Croker secured support of 17 out of 24 district leaders. Grant polled 114,111 votes against Hewitt's 71,979; Werner, Tammany Hall, pp. 312-313; New York Times, October 16, 1888, p. 1, October 17, 1888, p. 5; Nevins, Abram Hewitt, pp. 524-526. Nevins writes that Croker and Platt traded blocks of votes in order to assure a defeat of Hewitt to satisfy Croker, and a victory for Benjamin Harrison as President, to satisfy Platt.

⁵¹Cockran, Platform and Resolutions Ratified and Endorsed by the Democracy of the City of New York. Adopted at the Tammany Ratification Meeting, October 20, 1888, Cockran MSS.

York Governor David Hill who lost in a struggle against the Cleveland supporters for the Democratic Presidential nomination was reelected as Governor.⁵² Cockran in writing the evaluation of the results of the election maintained that despite Republican gains in almost every county of the State, the Tammany and Hill's machines proved that they were the only Democratic organizations able and ready to deliver the votes.⁵³

⁵²Ellis, Frost Syrett and Carman, New York State, p. 369. Hill, formerly mayor of Elmira in 1882, had been Cleveland's Lieutenant-Governor. When Cleveland resigned on January 6, 1885, Hill succeeded him; Chauncey Depew, My Memoirs of Eighty Years (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 219. Depew said that Hill's whole life was politics. Although he had a reputation as an excellent lawyer, Hill's heart and soul were in party contests and governing. He had consolidated the rural elements of his party so effectively that he compelled Tammany Hall to submit to his leadership; New York Times, September 28, 1888, p. 4; Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 710-715. Hill had planned to go to the National Convention as a delegate-at-large. Frederick Coudert who presided over the State convention, however, endorsed Edward Bissell of Buffalo and Oswald Ottendorfer, both Cleveland men. The Cleveland machine controlled the New York meeting and humiliated Hill.

⁵³Cockran, Resolution Congratulating Tammany on the Results of the 1888 Election, General Committee Meeting in Tammany Hall, Cockran MSS. The exact day is not recorded. The resolution also registered regret at the loss of the national election; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 439. Harrison received 233 votes and Cleveland 168. A slight shift in the distribution of the popular votes would have given Cleveland a victory. In New York the Republicans had a plurality of 13,002; Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 366. Cleveland received a 95,713 plurality nation-wide, with a total of 5,540,050 to Harrison's 5,444,337; R. C. E. Brown, History of New York, III, 347-349. Harrison received 648,759 votes in the State of New York while Cleveland fell slightly below with 635,757. Governor Hill ran ahead of both Harrison and Cleveland with 650,464 to Republican candidate Warner Miller's 631,293. Grant polled 114,111 votes for the office of mayor against Republican Joel Erhardt's 73,037 and Abram Hewitt's 71,979; Herbert Bass, "I am a Democrat": The Political Career of David Bennett Hill (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1961), pp. 121-123.

In the midst of all of this political turmoil, Cockran decided not to return to Congress. He declared that no good citizen could justify holding such a seat as one in the national legislature unless he could give it his utmost attention. He wrote to Edward C. Sheehy, chairman of the twelfth Congressional district of New York of his reasons:

I deem it due to the representatives of the party which has always extended to me generous though perhaps undeserved measure of confidence, that I should formally announce to them in convention assembled my fixed and unalterable determination to decline a renomination as representative in Congress. I am impelled to this conclusion by the necessities of my private business and beg to assure you that I have not reached it without regret.⁵⁴

A number of times Cockran mentioned that the duties in Washington had caused him to neglect his law practice and that if he did not try to salvage it he would lose it altogether.

In the next few years Cockran would devote himself to rebuilding his legal practice and share in the leadership of Tammany Hall. He would defend Croker against the accusations of the Fassett Committee and once again would return to Congress in 1891. By 1895 his affairs would turn in directions which would precipitate a break with Tammany and the Democratic party.

⁵⁴Cockran to Edward C. Sheehy, October 19, 1888, Cockran MSS.

CHAPTER III

COCKRAN-TAMMANY SUCCUMB TO REFORMERS -

COCKRAN'S BREAK WITH TAMMANY

Historians assert that the decade of the 1890's marked the beginning of the age of reform in the United States and set the tone of American politics for the greater part of the twentieth century. Sustained economic stress in the 1890's increased population pressures resulting from immigration, and unsolved industrial problems pressed heavily on the civic minded and provided the impetus to the growth of reform sentiment.¹

Before the 1890's, reformers held a single elemental view of the means for achieving good government. Bad governments represented inefficiency, corruption and high taxes. Good government meant honest political officials who saved money for the citizens. By the beginning of the last decade, however, the reformers developed a broader concept which included social and municipal improvement to be achieved

¹ Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 3; John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 68-69; Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order: 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), pp. 76-77, 111-113, 168-171.

largely through increased popular control of public officials, legislation reforming political procedures, and the strengthening of State police power to embrace social welfare programs.²

Reformers singled out the local machines and bosses as the source of many of the evils in the city. In New York City the most active participants in the reform movement came from the middle class. They were Protestant, well educated, professional or business men who anticipated frightening results from a rapidly industrializing society which encouraged an increasing influx of foreigners, particularly from predominantly Catholic eastern European countries.³ Men like James C. Carter, prominent attorney, Jay Schieffelin, chemist, Richard Welling, lawyer, Edmond Kelly, lawyer and soon to become member and secretary of the City Club of New York, and Fulton Cutting, director of several corporations, stood as a force against the representatives of the political establishment, Tammany Hall.⁴

In 1890, the New York State senate, dominated by Republicans, had responded to popular demand for investigation of civic corruption (brought on by scandals exposed in the 1888 city elections)

² Charles Garrett, The La Guardia Years: Machine and Reform Politics in New York City (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 29.

³ Ibid., pp. 20-21; Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 77-79, 87.

⁴ Garrett, LaGuardia, pp. 23-24.

and set up the Fassett Committee on Cities.⁵ Testimony subsequently revealed extensive corruption in municipal offices, particularly in the New York City legislature and police department.

The more spectacular aspect of this inquiry dealt with the conditions in the Ludlow Street Jail. Two prisoners, Henry A. Ives and George H. Strayner, told of how they received preferential treatment there because of bribes they paid to James P. Keating, warden of the prison and member of Tammany. Other bribes went to a number of Tammany deputy sheriffs. At one point, Cockran's law partner, William H. Clark had been charged with bribery but Clark denied the charges.⁶

Richard Croker, Tammany boss, aroused the Committee's curiosity when he came into an apparent surge of prosperity. Croker, a former saloon keeper, held no political office and had no private

⁵Myers, Tammany Hall, pp. 264, 271-272. The Fassett Committee was headed by Republican J. Sloat Fassett. The investigation and inquiry was carried on in New York City. In addition to the Committee, a Grand Jury was set up to investigate criminal charges made against individuals involved; Bass, "I am a Democrat," p. 102, The Fasset investigation began to take form as early as April 1888 when the Senator decided to investigate an aqueduct project for New York City. Bass says that this, added to other factors finally revealed threatened to bring to an abrupt end the political career of David Hill.

⁶Ibid., pp. 264, 272-275. The corruption of the Board of Aldermen was a matter of public record. In 1884 twenty-one members of the board (this did not include Grant who was a member at the time) voted to give a franchise for a surface railway on Broadway to the Broadway Surface Railroad Company. Bribery was involved. Mayor Edson vetoed the transaction but his veto was overridden.

income. Wishing to avoid questioning, he left rather suddenly for Europe. Cockran remained with the task of defending his colleagues, including Croker. Shortly after Croker arrived in Wiesbaden, Germany, he communicated with Cockran and warned him of the problems involved in defending the Tammany members. He wrote:

I should advise that if you are going to act as their lawyer it would be better for you and them that they should resign from Tammany Hall, as you know that the public will be made to believe that Tammany has employed you to defend them, which will work against them with the Judge and Jury, if the charges are not proven against them they can be reinstated in the organization. We are confronted with a dangerous combination, which are liable to have innocent men indicted. If they could succeed in having me indicted, I authorize you to send in my resignation to Tammany Hall. . . .⁷

Croker placed the responsibility for the troubles of Tammany on his enemies, such as James O'Brien, whom he characterized as "desperate scoundrels" who would use any method to achieve his destruction, even if it meant implicating innocent people.⁸ Croker

⁷ Richard Croker (Wiesbaden, Germany) to Cockran, April 11, 1890, Cockran MSS; New York Times, May 7, 1890. p. 1. The Times reported that Croker had been suffering from a mental breakdown, had a dazed look in his eyes and developed incoherent speech. They said that his friends claimed Croker might be suffering from cancer or cirrhosis of the liver.

⁸ Croker to Cockran, April 11, 1890, Cockran MSS. James O'Brien, a former Tammany member, in 1874 tried to destroy Croker who was accused of murder. Croker wrote "we had then against us a hostile District Attorney's office which gave me so much trouble, while they knew I was innocent, they done all in their power to prove I was guilty, but they could not succeed with the conspiracy. No one knows more about it than the present District Attorney who was at that time my lawyer."

named among such unfortunate ones Warden Keating, whom he had known for thirty years and who had been honest and a "man of confidence." Croker told Cockran that Keating had been the victim of a plot to close the Ludlow Street Jail. He said, "It has been intimated to me in a letter received a few days ago, that if the inmates of Ludlow Street Jail would testify against the Warden and others, that they would be liberated, it is just like one of O'Brien's old tricks."⁹

The Committee investigation revealed a corrupt bargain between Croker and Hugh Grant, current mayor. Croker's brother-in-law, Patrick H. McCann, testified that the Tammany boss had attempted to bribe aldermen to confirm Grant as Public Works Commissioner in 1884. If he had succeeded, Croker would have received ten cents a barrel on all cement used by the department. Grant, at another time, in 1885, was supposed to have given Croker money for his part in aiding the election of Grant to the position of sheriff.¹⁰

In his defense of Grant and Croker, Cockran lost his composure and accused the Fassett Committee of accepting false testimony and not allowing him to cross-examine McCann when he first

⁹ Croker to Cockran, April 11, 1890, Cockran MSS.

¹⁰ New York Times, May 4, 1890, p. 1. Croker was supposed to have visited McCann with a bag of \$180,000 to be given to a Tom Adams who was to help purchase two Republican aldermanic votes; June 20, 1890, p. 4. July 5, 1890, p. 4; Lothrop Stoddard Master of Manhattan: The Life of Richard Croker (New York: Longman's Green and Co., 1931), pp. 114-118.

appeared before them. Finally, Cockran did question the witness and skillfully got him to admit that the arrangements to secure the Commission position for Grant never materialized.¹¹

When Croker returned from Germany in June, he appeared before the Committee and denied McCann's story of the aldermanic bribe. On the matter involving Grant's gratuity to him for his aid in making him sheriff, Croker merely said that McCann had exaggerated the sum involved.¹²

As the inquiry dragged into July, Cockran became less and less controlled in his behavior before the witnesses. The probings revealed that Croker's wife and child were used as couriers in the transactions between Grant and Croker. This exposure aroused Cockran's sensibilities and he lashed into the Committee with statements such as "why has a wife and mother been introduced into this investigation by these people and why have the helpless years of childhood not been protected by these unscrupulous savages?"¹³

The Times accused Cockran of behaving badly at the investigations and said that his "boisterous" and "maladroit" methods had made matters worse, particularly for Mayor Grant. Finally the mayor engaged Joseph Choate to argue his case because Cockran had lost

¹¹ New York Times, May 4, 1890, p. 1.

¹² Ibid., June 20, 1890, p. 4; June 24, 1890, p. 1.

¹³ Ibid., July 5, 1890, p. 4.

control. The newspaper wrote that Cockran had accepted this decision "with a submissiveness quite unusual with him," and that he had made the case for Grant and for Tammany decidedly worse.¹⁴

By the time the Fassett Committee terminated its work, Cockran was close to exhaustion; even his friends acknowledged that he needed a rest. For months, in order to bolster morale, he had done all the public speaking for Tammany Hall. Frequently, meetings had degenerated into Cockran entertainment. His critics described his efforts as "bluster," "well enough for some purposes and for some occasions, but bluster is not always an effective way of convincing people." He attacked opponents with "utterances . . . regarded as anything but diplomatic. He struck with a bludgeon instead of a stiletto. His defense of the chieftains lost all its force by the abundance of the abuse that was mixed with it," according to the Times.¹⁵

As a result of the Fassett exposures reform Republicans, the County Democracy and Independents joined forces against Tammany and formed the People's Municipal League.¹⁶ As one of their aims they presented a fusion candidate for mayor to run against Hugh Grant.

¹⁴New York Times, May 4, 1890, p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid., July 13, 1890, p. 13.

¹⁶Myers, Tammany Hall, p. 272. The League resulted from the findings of the New York State Committee on Cities, known as the Fassett Committee; Garrett, La Guardia, p. 24.

The Republicans recognized that they could not run a candidate of their own on a straight party ticket because such efforts in the past had met with failure. Reformers agreed that the candidate had to be a Democrat who would emphasize efficiency in municipal affairs, especially in the departments charged with lighting, cleaning, and policing the city. More important, they realized that he should be well known and not of a select circle of personal friends.¹⁷ The League, therefore, nominated a County Democrat, Francis M. Scott, a very able lawyer with intimate knowledge of municipal matters.¹⁸

Supporting Scott, the New York Times attacked Tammany and singled out Cockran for special attention once again. His rhetorical efforts came in for ridicule as follows: "windy Bourke Cockran stepped to the front of the galleries . . . last night and prepared to warble his "Defense of Tammany," which is getting about as threadbare as the Scotch air that every band is familiar with. . . . " Commenting on his weariness, the Times said "his erstwhile whole potato voice had been strained by the exigencies of the campaign to a sort of Mayonnaise consistency. . . ."¹⁹ The newspaper attacked him also for using his influence in finding employment for a member

¹⁷ New York Times, October 9, 1890, p. 4 (editorial).

¹⁸ Ibid., October 10, 1890. Scott had been a corporation counsel, and a member of the aqueduct commission. The candidate for county clerk and sheriff as well as president of the board of aldermen would be Republican.

¹⁹ Ibid., November 2, 1890, p. 5.

of his family.²⁰

Cockran's health and state of mind appeared to be at a low point during this campaign. He was described as having "dark rings under his eagle eyes" and looking "pretty well fagged out." In answering the reformers who had berated Tammany and its "illiterate, brutal, and ignorant" supporters, Cockran told his audience that the Wigwam did not care about the snobs or the "society ladies who oppose us," but rather concerned itself with the worker and the underdog, the brick layer, car drivers and longshoremen who vote. He felt confident that the results of the election on the following Tuesday would vindicate Tammany.²¹ Regular party members who had any desire for political success had to dismiss thoughts of joining with independent reformers. The economically secure, civic minded patrician could afford the luxury of non-party involvement and at the same time crusade against corruption. Cockran, dependent upon the organization for office, either in the city or in Washington, remained loyal to Tammany.

Despite the mounting charges brought out in the Fassett investigation, Tammany emerged the victor in the 1890 election and maintained effective power over city affairs. Grant and the other officials were swept into office by a large vote of 23,000. This

²⁰New York Times, October 19, 1890, p. 5.

²¹Ibid., November 2, 1890, p. 5.

gave the machine renewed security and handed at least a temporary defeat to the Municipal League. A number of factors had contributed to this. Republicans had not come out to the polls because they thought it disloyal to vote for a Democrat, even if he were a fusion candidate. Some of the canvassers did not cover all districts. In addition, some of the Republicans had been secretly friendly to the Hall. Others were lazy and indifferent and just did not vote. The estimate is that about 30,000 Republicans did not vote in the city elections in 1890.²²

While political reform began to bear fruit in other states, New York lagged behind.²³ Not until 1891 did the legislature pass a secret ballot law. Between 1888 and 1890 Governor David Hill had vetoed electoral reform bills because he refused to acknowledge the need for them.²⁴ Tammany Hall had also opposed alteration of the

²² James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (2 vols. London: MacMillan Co., 1893, 1895), II, 402-403.

²³ New York Times, January 17, 1890, p. 4, February 9, 1890, p. 2, October 3, 1891, p. 4. Democrats in Maine legislature approved ballot reform. In Pennsylvania the ballot became the decisive issue in 1891 election of Governor Robert E. Pattison. In New York City's 23rd Assembly district Republicans and Democrats united in favor of ballot reform.

²⁴ Ellis, Frost, Syrett and Carman, New York State, p. 371. Governor Hill had been in conflict with the Republican legislature in New York. They tried to embarrass him by passing reform bills which they knew he would veto. He had objected to the Saxton bill for the secret ballot in 1888 and 1889.

procedures which protected its power. Cockran, generally suspicious of reformers in these early days of his career, echoed the sentiments of his colleagues when he challenged those who advocated ballot reform as promoting legislation which would infringe on the franchise of the poor and uneducated. He singled out in particular the Saxton secret ballot bill. It provided for an official, secretly marked ballot to replace the party ballots. The latter were printed in different colors, thus enabling poll watchers to know how every one voted. Public opinion favored the Saxton bill.²⁵ Cockran, however, held that the legislation amounted to nothing more than a subterfuge. He said "we hold secrecy to be the essential feature of the ballot, and we earnestly protest against the enactment of any law which would substitute for secrecy a mere promise of secrecy."²⁶ In an editorial, the New York Times pointed out the emptiness of Cockran's argument with the statement that "the absurdity of this protest is evident when we consider the entire absence of safeguards for secrecy now and the opportunity that exists for not only knowing how men vote, but of making sure that they vote according to promise. . . . " The newspaper disputed the Cockran argument that the illiterate voter should be guaranteed protection. The Times wrote

²⁵New York Times, January 12, 1889, p. 5; Ellis, Frost, et al., New York State, p. 371.

²⁶New York Times, January 12, 1889, p. 5.

"If a man cannot read his own ballot there is no way of enabling him to vote with absolute secrecy, but he is entitled to the protection of at least an official promise of secrecy under oath. . . ."²⁷

In 1891, Governor Hill, yielding to mounting public pressure signed an amended Saxton Bill. The law provided that a "paster ballot" be placed over the regular list of candidates on the official ballot. This made it possible for a voter to see the picture of his candidate as well as the party designation after each name.²⁸

²⁷ New York Times, January 13, 1889, p. 4; Bass, "I am A Democrat," pp. 98-101. The Saxton bill provided that all ballots were to be printed at public expense and distributed only by the ballot clerks at the polls. Each party which polled more than three per cent of the vote in the previous election would automatically qualify for a place on the printed ballot. There was also to be a space left blank for write-in votes. To safeguard against fraud the law provided that the ballot be initialed by the clerk in his own handwriting on the back of it. The ballot would be filled in within a private booth. The Governor did not like the fact that the public would have to bear the cost of the ballot because it would increase taxes. He also felt that printing ballot at public expense would invite thousands of names on petitions and compel the State to print all of their ballots. The number of candidate would increase, and confuse the voters. He thought the bill unconstitutional because it would impinge upon the citizens' suffrage. Certain features of the bill contained features that would sow the seeds of infringements. For instance a clerk could fail to initial a ballot thus depriving the voter of his right. Other objections such as a limit of five minutes for voting would be too slow for some voters--such as the aged.

²⁸ New York Times, October 3, 1891, p. 4. The mass of Democrats favored ballot reform because they most needed the protection from intimidation and corruption through the secrecy of the ballot. The Times said that the party was made up largely of the poorer class of voters who were often coerced by their employers to vote in a certain way; November 24, 1891, p. 2. After the 1891 election, the Times reported that the blanket paster ballot worked against the organization ticket and in favor of the individual nominee. It afforded abundant opportunities for deals and it made men who would be ordinarily

The apparent importance of Cockran had become so widely acknowledged that rumors had begun to circulate that he might be Tammany's candidate for the Senate in 1891. Ex-President Cleveland, in a letter to his old partner Wilson Bissell, late in 1890, expressed

energetic party workers at the polls indifferent to the success of their own party or faction so long as the men in whose election they were interested were protected by being upon every paster ballot that they were distributing. The paster ballot nullified the principle of reform. It also gave no advantage to the Democrats. Ibid., January 7, 1893, p. 5, January 13, 1893, p. 9. In 1893 Tammany leaders tried to find a new form of ballot, to take the place of several which they found unsatisfactory. Croker went over several samples with Speaker Sulzer at Tammany Hall in January even though there was no bill pending at the time in the State legislature. Tammany was interested in the blanket ballot. In this type, the lists of each party's candidates were arranged on parallel columns under the party name and an insignia of the party next to the party name. If the voter wanted to vote straight ticket all he had to do was to place a mark in the circle of the party's mark. In front of the name of each candidate there was a small square, and if the voter wanted to split his ticket all he had to do was to put a mark in that space in front of the name of the candidate. This ballot was not much larger than half of a page of the Times; Bass, "I am a Democrat," p. 151-152. A blank strip was provided for write-ins. The person who wished to vote a straight ticket deposited the strip which listed his party's nominees. No party or individual could supply other ballots. In their stead, they could supply pasters, which, when pasted onto the official ballots, became themselves official. The paster was considered the choice of the voter. This took care of the illiterate voter. With the paster in his pocket, the non-reader could enter the voting booth, select any of the strips out of the pack and place his paster on it.

surprise at the notion.²⁹ The New York Times discussed the possibility but doubted Cockran's chances since David Hill seemed to be the serious contender. Moreover, Cockran's popularity had declined temporarily because of his behavior at the Fassett investigations.³⁰ Despite the speculations, the New York legislature, on January 19, 1891, nominated Governor Hill to succeed William M. Evarts.³¹

It is debatable whether Cockran would have accepted a Senatorial seat in 1891. Although he did not discuss it publicly at the time, to his friends he expressed a reluctance to go to Washington a short time later. During this period (1891) Representative Francis Spinola died, leaving a House seat vacant. Croker decided to send Cockran to fill it. Before the orator agreed to run he made a special point of seeing Croker to tell him of his reluctance to accept the nomination under any circumstances. The Tammany boss persuaded him to accept. In November, 1891, Cockran won in the

²⁹ Grover Cleveland to Wilson S. Bissell, November 8, 1890, in Allan Nevins, Letters of Grover Cleveland (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1933), p. 235.

³⁰ New York Times, December 19, 1890, p. 1. It appears that when Croker left for Europe he left word with Thomas Gilroy, Commissioner of Public Works, and James Martin, Police Commissioner, that they should hold Cockran "in readiness as the choice of New York in the Democratic Caucus."

³¹ Ibid., January 20, 1891, p. 1. Roswell Flower became governor September 14, 1891.

special election in the tenth Congressional district and subsequently returned to the capital.³²

In the election of 1892 Cockran represented the Tammany society at the Democratic National Convention. The New York Democrats once again split over the Presidential nominee. Cleveland had decided some months before, in December 1891, to run again. In a letter to Bissell he had given his reasons. He said, "it seems to me that the only way for a decent Democrat to live in New York and maintain his self-respect, and at the same time stand by his party is to break this thing up."³³ He meant Tammany's power. The

³² New York Times, October 11, 1891, p. 5, January, 8, 1893, p. 17. This article relates how Cockran came to accept the nomination. It reported that John Scannell, a not too reputable character, wanted Spinola's seat. Croker had decided to give it to him but the public outcry against it was so great that instead he offered it to Cockran. One night on his way home to Long Island, Cockran learned of his nomination. Resolved to decline, he went to Tammany Hall the next day. He met Scannell as he entered the building and the following conversation is reported by the Times.

" 'What have you decided to do?' asked Scannell.

'I shall not accept,' Mr. Cockran replied.

'You must,' said Scannell, 'I don't mind being beaten by you, but I'll not surrender to any one else.'

Cockran pushed into the hall and found Croker and told him of his determination.

'Have you seen Scannell?' asked Mr. Croker.

Mr. Cockran told him of the conversation he had just held with Scannell.

'You see the matter is settled, and why will you throw a firebrand in now!' said Mr. Croker.

'Mr. Cockran consented to let this nomination stand. . . . '

³³ Cleveland to Bissell, December 12, 1891 in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 273.

former Chief Executive, who had retired to New York City after his defeat in 1888, had written William F. Vilas of Wisconsin that Governor Hill had captured the New York State organization and would try to secure the nomination for himself.³⁴ Cleveland expected no help for his own candidacy from the State machine or Tammany.³⁵

In February 1892, Hill called a State convention at Albany secured the selection of delegates pledged to him. Contrary to precedence this convention was held earlier than usual. State presidential conventions were held no earlier than the middle of April.³⁶ Anti-Hill forces led by William C. Whitney, immediately after the February gathering, branded it as a "snap convention" and proceeded to build up reform sentiment in the State and to create a Cleveland bandwagon.³⁷ The Cleveland Democrats held a preliminary convention in Albany in February and after protesting against Hill's maneuver adjourned to meet again on May 31 at Syracuse.³⁸ By the end of

³⁴ Cleveland to William F. Vilas, October 17, 1889, in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 214, 43. Vilas was a Wisconsin Democrat, reformer, leader of the bar in his region, Postmaster-General in the Cleveland Administration and succeeded L. Q. C. Lamar as Secretary of the Interior. See Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 196, 361.

³⁵ Cleveland to Daniel S. Lamont, September 13, 1890 in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 232, July 3, 1891, p. 261.

³⁶ New York Times, February 7, 1892, p. 4; Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 716-717. The "snap" convention elected 72 delegates to the national convention. The Albany convention was held on February 22, 1892.

³⁷ Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 716-717.

³⁸ R. C. E. Brown, History of New York State, III, p. 376; Hirsch, William C. Whitney, pp. 382-383; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 483-484.

the spring the Hill boom collapsed. The Cleveland Democrats met at Syracuse, adopted a resolution declaring Cleveland as their choice for the Presidency, and elected delegates to go to the Chicago convention determined to embarrass if not defeat Hill.³⁹

Almost one thousand delegates assembled at Chicago, on June 18, 1892 once again wondering whether the New York delegation would be able to defeat Cleveland. On the advice of William C. Whitney and other Cleveland leaders the New York "Anti-Snappers," as they were named, did not contest the seats of the Hill delegates. Whitney worked on other delegations to build up Cleveland support against Hill.⁴⁰ Among the most prominent pro-Cleveland men at Chicago were William L. Wilson, former president of Jefferson and Lee University and Congressman from West Virginia, Charles S. Fairchild, ex-Secretary of the Treasury under Cleveland, and William F. Vilas. The New York delegation committed to Hill included William Bourke Cockran, Tammany orator, Richard C. Croker, Tammany boss, William F. Sheehan, Buffalo lawyer and Lieutenant Governor of New York, Roswell Flower, Governor, and Edward Murphy, Jr., Troy brewer and chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee.⁴¹

Cockran, at the convention, after having visited a number of

³⁹ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 389; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 486-487; Breen, Thirty Years, pp. 717-718.

⁴⁰ Brown, History of New York State, III, p. 380.

⁴¹ New York Times, June 19, 1892, p. 4.

delegations, discovered that Hill had very little support outside of his New York backers. When he returned to his headquarters, Cockran found his friends engaged in signing a declaration which warned that Cleveland's nomination would result in the loss of the electoral ticket in the State. Cockran explained that his findings contradicted that statement. He warned them that if Cleveland did succeed (and at this point it appeared to be almost a certainty) then the New York delegation would look ridiculous.⁴² Cockran finally persuaded his friends to modify their "warning." They agreed to follow his advice, changing it to read Cleveland's nomination "would expose" the State, "to the loss of the electoral vote."⁴³

When nominations were in order, the delegates and visitors in the galleries had become unruly. Overcrowding and long hours of deliberations and speeches contributed to the bedlam. Dozens of delegates were standing on chairs and trying to get the floor. Representative John Sharp Williams of Mississippi moved that the sergeant-at-arms of the Chicago police clear the galleries. The noise was so loud that his motion was almost lost in the clamour. Hissing and yelling and "all sorts of contemptible interjections" arose at his

⁴²New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 17.

⁴³Ibid., January 8, 1898, p. 17. The "Warning of New York's Seventy-Two Democratic Delegates at Chicago" was written by Col. Timothy Williams, Governor Flower's secretary. Cockran and George Raines of Rochester contributed to the change in the statement. The story was told to a reporter by a delegate from Rochester.

suggestion. The chairman finally directed the sergeant-at-arms to use whatever means he could to suppress the disorder.⁴⁴ When the assemblage did not allow John W. Daniel of Virginia to finish his seconding speech for Hill, William Bourke Cockran rose to ask for adjournment. By now it was close to two o'clock in the morning, but the delegates ignored Cockran's motion. Instead the galleries called for Cockran to give an oration. He begged them to excuse him because he was physically exhausted, but to no avail. They insisted.⁴⁵

Cockran mounted the platform and, looking at his audience with evidence of weariness and strain on his face, he shook his head as if to say "take the blame on yourselves if you are tortured with a speech at this hour," and, according to one reporter, gave the greatest, most emotional oration of his career. The "wittiest, sharpest tooth in Tammany's mouth" did his duty in trying to sway the Convention away from the reformer-backed Grover Cleveland to the Democratic machine politician David Hill.⁴⁶

Although it had been labelled as a seconding speech for Hill, Cockran's address was an emotional diatribe against Clevelandism and

⁴⁴Democratic Party National Convention, Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention of 1892 (Chicago: June 18-28, 1892), pp.138-139. Leon Abbet of New Jersey nominated Cleveland. William D. DeWitt of Brooklyn nominated Hill. Interruptions and calls did not come from the regular members.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 140-141, 144-145.

⁴⁶Toledo Sunday Journal, June 26, 1892, Cockran MSS.

Mugwumpery. He wanted his listeners to know that the former President had done nothing for his home state and that his backers had, in fact, tried to undermine the Democratic party of New York. He accused the Mugwumps of using the Democratic party to promote their devious ends and then to vilify it after they no longer found any need of it. He said:

Gentlemen, we will be loyal, but our experiences in this body are apt to convince us that there may be such a thing as too much loyalty for one's personal comfort. . . . no matter what its action may be, there is in the State of New York, a vote which cannot be controlled by political machinery, and that is not always the Mugwump vote . . . some of the gentlemen who seconded the nomination [Cleveland's] seem to have reached the conclusion that the business of the Democratic party is to officer the Convention, shape its policies, and name its candidate in order to please an element that . . . derides its history and professes superiority to it. . . .⁴⁷

Cockran protested against the surrender of the party to "the control of those who despised and disliked it." He maintained that popularity of Cleveland existed outside the State of New York. He recognized that people throughout the country remembered the former President pleasantly because he had been the only man whose career brought the public in touch with the Federal government. Despite the national sentiment, New Yorkers considered him and his associates traitors who collaborated with the Republicans to overthrow the New York Democracy. In a burst of emotion, Cockran castigated the Mugwumps for their part in New York City's 1890 election. He

⁴⁷Democratic National Convention Proceedings, 1892, June 26, 1892, pp. 145-146.

accused them of trading the most important political offices, that of sheriff and clerk, to the Republicans for the latter's support for the Democratic-fusion mayoral candidate. To add to the injury, they had slandered the party members as associates of "organized crime," "semi-criminal and beyond the pale of civilized life."⁴⁸

Cockran explained how the Democrats had to salvage the party and build up its strength. He begged the delegates not to aid in its destruction.

We have a homogeneous party now. For God's sake leave it to us. If we be not accorded the nomination that we ask for from the State of New York, give us any citizen in this United States who is a Democrat. Give us some man who will not raise up against us any active hostile force within our ranks.⁴⁹

Cockran finished with the warning that if Cleveland were to win the nomination, Democrats would refuse to vote and the result would be disastrous. He said that he had no personal animosity against Cleveland and that he even had respect for him, but he opposed him at this Convention because "he comes between my party and the light of success at the polls; I oppose him in this Convention because his candidacy imperils the success of a party which is now visited with bright and alluring prospects."⁵⁰

Although William Bourke Cockran was acclaimed for this great

⁴⁸ Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 1892, June 26, 1892, pp. 146-148.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 150-151.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 155.

and eloquent address, he had no effect on the outcome of the balloting. As soon as he stepped down, the Cleveland men moved for the count and on the first ballot Cleveland received 617 votes to Hill's 114.⁵¹

Cockran achieved national fame as result of his speech. The Chicago Post referred to him as a great orator and expressed admiration for his ability to deliver such a discourse "on the inspiration of the moment when he faced an audience which he knew to be hostile and intolerant."⁵² The Toledo Sunday Journal reported that there "stood this greatest of orators," holding twenty thousand spectators who were hot, weary and hungry "spellbound for nearly an hour." Never had there been so dramatic a moment in America as "when the stout, heavy-browed lawyer from New York, bearing most evident signs of the terrific mental and physical strain he had been undergoing, faced the throng. . . . There is but one adjective applicable to the effort and that, superb!"⁵³

After returning to New York, Cleveland's campaign manager, Whitney, approached the leaders of the New York Democracy for

⁵¹Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland: The Man and the Statesman (2 vols., New York: Harper and Bros., 1923), I, 340-341.

⁵²The Chicago Evening Post, June 26, 1892, Cockran MSS.

⁵³The Toledo Sunday Journal, June 26, 1892, July 3, 1892, Ibid.

their help in bringing in New York's vote.⁵⁴ Cleveland objected to Whitney's plans to negotiate with Tammany-Hill forces, but the tycoon reminded the former president that he had been nominated against the "united voice" of the State party. He told Cleveland that if he wanted to carry New York he had better make some concessions.⁵⁵ The nominee finally relented and met with Croker, Murphy and Sheehan in the Hotel Victoria, although Cleveland refused to make any promises to them.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Cleveland to Vilas, July 24, 1892, in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 295. Whitney knew that without them Cleveland could not win in New York. Cleveland told Vilas that Whitney had been working day and night to get that support; Whitney to Cleveland August 9, 1892, Cleveland MSS., Library of Congress; Whitney wrote Cleveland that he met with the New York State campaign committee and talked with them for several hours. He said "if you think well of it I wish you could write Murphy a note in a friendly spirit." Whitney wrote the letter and enclosed it. He also urged Cleveland to keep out of published correspondence; Whitney to Cleveland, July 29, 1892, Cleveland MSS. ~~July 29, 1892, Cleveland MSS.~~ Whitney wrote to Cleveland that it looked as if the Mugwumps would support him in this campaign. He said "Things are looking well in my opinion. . . . The Republicans are still running after the disaffected and with no apparent result."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Whitney to Cleveland, August 30, 1892, in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 304; Whitney to Cleveland, August 22, 1892, Cleveland MSS. Whitney expressed optimism getting the State Committee's endorsement for Cleveland. He wrote, "I think we have all the best of them--his [Hill's] friends from end to end. I will lay down an item pretty soon and either bring about a breach between them and Hill or bring Hill into line." Whitney told Cleveland that despite his mistrust of them he must remember that "they have the organization. . . ."; Nevins, Letter of Cleveland, p. 283.

Cockran campaigned for Cleveland in Connecticut. Addressing himself to national issues, he criticized the Republican administration in Washington for its excesses such as the "billion dollar Congress," the high McKinley Tariff and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Cockran attracted great crowds. In Meriden, for example, hundreds of people had to be turned away because the Town Hall, where the orator came as guest speaker, could not accomodate them all. Many who heard him were laborers pleased at his anti-high tariff position. Cockran declared that the McKinley tariff advocates argued erroneously that the law was protecting American labor against foreign competition. What the workers of this country needed, instead, was to be vigilant against the Republicans who had conspired to take away their rights and liberties through protective tariff legislation.⁵⁷ In New Haven where he spoke at the Grand Opera House, he contrasted Cleveland's efficient reform policies with the hypocrisy of the Harrison tactics. The four years of Republicanism had left the nation with a deficit. He asserted that the Republicans had used dishonest methods to reduce the national surplus which Cleveland had tried to reduce honestly.⁵⁸

The campaign of 1892 could be described as a quiet and

⁵⁷ New York Times, October 6, 1892, p. 5. He drew more than 2500 people. Seventy-five percent of the Meriden residents were mechanics, employed in the city's industries.

⁵⁸ Ibid., October 30, 1892, p. 2.

dignified affair with a stress on tariff, free government and the record of the "billion dollar congress." The Democrats attacked the Republicans for their Hamiltonianism. The Republicans on the other hand accused the Democrats of being free traders and Jacksonian "wild cat" bankers.⁵⁹

Cleveland carried New York State by 45,000 votes. His victory says Nevins, "astonished everyone" because it was the most decisive since the re-election of Lincoln in 1864. The fact that Cleveland carried New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Indiana did not surprise political observers. The "sweep" in Illinois, Wisconsin and California was "extraordinary," writes Nevins. Moreover, Populist candidates unseated a number of Western Republicans, for industrial conditions in the country had grown worse. Cleveland won with 277 electoral votes against Harrison's 145.⁶⁰

In the two years following the 1892 election, there occurred a public outcry against Tammany and city corruption. In March, 1894,

⁵⁹Festus Summers, William L. Wilson and Tariff Reform (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), p. 132.

⁶⁰Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, pp. 283-284. Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 507. The popular vote for Cleveland was 5,556,000 and for Harrison, 5,175,000; Hirsch, William C. Whitney, pp. 411-412. Thomas F. Gilroy, Tammany's marginal candidate ran ahead of Cleveland by only 300 votes; R. C. E. Brown, History of New York State, III, 382. New York gave Cleveland 654,868 and Harrison 609,350 votes. James B. Weaver the Populist candidate received 16,429. The Democrats elected 20 of the 34 Congressmen and 74 of the 128 Assemblymen.

the Independent County Organization led by John D. Townsend, called for an investigation of all the city departments.⁶¹ The Republican controlled State Senate created a committee headed by Clarence Lexow, with John W. Goff as the counsel, to look into the charges. The Lexow committee disclosed cooperation on the part of the police and of Tammany members with organized criminals to promote vice and prostitution in New York City.⁶² The result of these investigations left Tammany disrupted. On May 1, Richard Croker had resigned as boss of Tammany. Rumors spread that Cockran who was in New York City to argue an estate case had come to see ex-Mayor Grant to discuss the next step and strategy to save the organization. Cockran denied all the speculations and in addition refused to discuss Croker's retirement.⁶³

⁶¹New York Times, March 5, 1894, p. 2.

⁶²Myers, Tammany Hall, p. 276. In 1891 and 1893 many fraudulent ballots had been cast. Police captains, appointed by Tammany's President of the Police Board, aided in this evil. In 1892 Thomas Gilroy, Cockran's friend and Tammany sachem became mayor. He did nothing to dismiss these individuals; Garrett, La Guardia, p. 38. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, minister of Madison Square Presbyterian Church, did much to arouse public sentiment against the existing machine; James Carter to Cockran, May 4, 1894, Cockran MSS. Carter wrote to Cockran that it was "generally thought that every branch of the city government had improved. This seems very strange in the light of the complaints of reformers; Connable and Silberfarb, Tigers of Tammany, p. 213; Werner, Tammany Hall, pp. 356-406. Werner covers the investigation in detail.

⁶³New York Times, May 8, 1894, p. 1, May 9, 1894, p. 1, May 10, 1894, p. 1, May 11, 1894, p. 1, May 12, 1894, p. 1; June 20, 1894, p. 8. Cockran had not made a major speech for Tammany since 1892. He had not been to rallies since July 4, 1893. He failed to become sachem as well; Alfred Henry Lewis, Richard Croker (New York: Life Publishing Co., 1901) p. 337.

By November, 1894, reformers had once again rallied forces and formed the Committee of Seventy, made up of civic organizations and Republicans. They presented a fusion ticket with Republican William L. Strong, dry goods merchant and banker, as their candidate for Mayor.⁶⁴ Cockran did not campaign in the 1894 municipal election. He favored Strong instead of his old friend, Hugh Grant, but believed it would be better not to electioneer, to avoid a personal break with Grant. Strong won with 45,000 votes and brought with him a full reform administration. Among the new officers was Theodore Roosevelt as president of the police board.⁶⁵

On December 25, 1894, the news broke of a split between Cockran and Croker. Unable to contain his frustration at the Tammany defeat and exasperated by Cockran's independence, Croker lashed out at Tammany orator and labeled him an informer. He declared:

I have become satisfied that certain publications about Tammany Hall organization and myself made since the last election have been inspired by Cockran, and I now have no hesitation in saying that I believe he has been going around corners to talk about me, and acting in a way that sometimes leads men to be termed informers.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Myers, Tammany Hall, pp. 442-443.

⁶⁵ New York Times, November 15, p. 8, May 9, 1894, p. 1. Cockran said that the people had condemned the men who had betrayed the principles of the Democracy. It has been reported that Cockran and Grant had not been on friendly terms for a while; Garrett, LaGuardia, p. 38.

⁶⁶ New York Times, December 25, 1894, p. 1.

He said that Cockran had been angry at him because of disappointment at not getting the Senatorial nomination in 1893. Croker maintained that not only did he not qualify for that office, but Cochran did not deserve to return to the House of Representatives because he had not been a resident of the city. Disgusted with Cockran's aloofness, Croker complained that the Tammany orator had not contributed financially to any of his own elections or to any campaign funds of the Democratic party. "Is it any wonder," Croker protested, that one "gets sick of politics when you have to deal with such characters?" Contrary to public opinion, Croker said that he thought Cockran never amounted to anything as a politician, that he was like a "Western tornado-all wind," playing to the galleries.⁶⁷

Cockran never discussed this controversy publicly. His papers reveal very little about it as well. James McGurrian suggests that Croker's hostility to Cockran can be traced to Mrs. Croker's separation from her husband. McGurrian suggest that Mrs. Croker not willing to tolerate her husband's neglect, approached Cockran for legal aid in obtaining a divorce. Cockran refused to become involved. It is likely that Croker, hearing of his wife's plans, thought that Cockran was instrumental in obtaining a separation decree in 1894.⁶⁸ Implica-

⁶⁷ New York Times, December 25, 1894, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Croker to Cockran, March 22, 1899, Cockran MSS; Cockran to Elizabeth Croker, March 23, 1899, Ibid.; New York Times, January 14, 1953, Cockran MSS. James McGurrian wrote a letter to the New York Times that the break with Croker had nothing to do with politics or financial involvement but was due specifically to Cockran's outspoken sympathy with Mrs. Croker when she sued for a separation

tions that the Croker-Cockran dispute might have been personal can be found also in a Times report. of June. 1894, stating that the dispute was not political.⁶⁹

Notwithstanding all the speculation about Cockran's relations with Tammany and its temporarily retired boss, Cockran refused to discuss the organization or its problems with the press. The year 1895 was a low point in his career. What had seemed a most successful and promising life only a year before was darkened not only by professional failure, but by personal tragedy. His wife Rhoda, ill for two years, though not seriously, suddenly died of an internal hemorrhage on February 20th, 1895.⁷⁰ Cockran was alone.

Wifeless, childless, tired, depressed, with no political prospects, and a defunct law practice, Cockran decided to change his environment. On March 19, 1895, he left for Europe where he remained for six months. He returned to the United States in August.

in October 1894. In his biography of Cockran, McGurkin cites a letter written by Mrs. Croker to Cockran dated May 17, 1894 (p. 174) and a reply from Cockran refusing to handle divorce proceedings. The Cockran papers have no correspondence referring to this question in 1894. The letters which I have cited are the only manuscripts specifically devoted to this issue, but since they are dated 1899 it appears to this writer that the evidence supporting McGurkin's thesis is too flimsy.

⁶⁹ New York Times, June 20, 1894, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Ibid., February 21, 1895, p. 5, February 24, p. 9. Rhoda left Cockran \$90,000 in her will; "Last Will and Testament of Rhoda E. Cockran," February 29, 1892, Cockran MSS. The will was probated on March 8, 1895.

When questioned by the press whether he would return to politics, Cockran said that he would not and under no circumstances did he intend to hold any office in Tammany "no matter what faction may be dominating." His only desire at this time was to rebuild his life and law practice.⁷¹

The political arena, however, proved too tempting for Cockran despite his pronouncements to the contrary. Within a year after his return from Europe he found himself once again in political debates; once again mounting the speakers platform.⁷² This time, however, he would exert his energies on behalf of the former opposition. In 1896, William Bourke Cockran campaigned for William McKinley, the Republican candidate for United States President. To his friends and those who followed his career, Cockran's decision did not come as a surprise. A study of Cockran's congressional career during the period 1887 to 1895 reveals as well as it clarifies the economic philosophy which motivated his support of McKinley.

⁷¹Cockran, Passport to Great Britain, March 19, 1895, Cockran MSS. Cockran was described as five feet eleven inches tall, high forehead, grey eyes, straight nose, moustache, round chin, dark brown hair, dark complexion and round faced, lately member of House of Representatives of the United States; New York Times, August 14, 1895, p. 8, August 15, 1895, p. 1.

⁷²New York Times, May 1, 1896, p. 1. Cockran fell and injured his left hip and the tendons of his leg. The accident occurred while he was riding his bicycle in Central Park. Letter from Thomas B. Reed to Cockran, May 2, 1896, Cockran MSS; Rochester Herald, August 4, 1896. Cockran went to Europe in the early summer of 1896 and returned in August.

CHAPTER IV

COCKRAN IN CONGRESS, 1887-1896

In the years between 1887 and 1896, William Bourke Cockran served three terms in Congress in the fiftieth, fifty-second and fifty-third. The most important questions debated in (and out of) Congress in the last two decades of the nineteenth century focused on the protective tariff, currency and the income tax. The two major parties, the Democrats in particular, were divided on these issues. For example, the tariff reform wing of the Democratic party attracted large numbers of political conservatives who looked to the economic philosophy of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.¹ Attempts to reduce the high duties set during the Civil War met with failure. The Tariff Act of 1883, the first general revision since that period could be described as "a half-hearted attempt" by protectionists to make some concession to those who demanded a modification of the tariff system. Generally, it retained a high level of duties. In the years immediately following attempts to amend it were blocked by Republicans and a strong minority

¹Ray Ginger, The Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), pp. 95-96.

of Democrats led by Representative Samuel Randall from Pennsylvania.² When the United States Treasury reported a surplus the majority of Democrats proposed a downward tariff revision to reduce the surplus. President Cleveland on December 6, 1887 devoted his entire annual message to the tariff and urged a general reduction of duties and placing raw materials on the free list. Effectively Cleveland committed his party to an anti-protection policy.³ Subsequently Democratic Representative Roger Q. Mills of Texas, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee prepared the legislation known as the Mills' bill which proposed a reduced tariff.⁴ In March, 1888, Mills presented it to the House and on May 31, 1888 the bill was passed as a party measure. All Republicans and four Democrats voted against it.⁵ It failed to get through the Senate.⁶

² Frank William Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States (4th ed. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), pp. 230, 249-251.

³ Summers, William L. Wilson, p. 70; New York Times, December 16, 1887, p. 1; Taussig, Tariff History, pp. 252-253.

⁴ Merrill, Bourbon Leader, p. 123; Summers, William L. Wilson, pp. 78-79.

⁵ New York Times, March 2, 1888, p. 1, May 31, 1888, p. 2; Merrill, Bourbon Leader, p. 124. The provisions that the party voted for favored the Democratic South. The north, Merrill writes, faced reductions on finished metal products, wool, glass, copper ore, tin-plate and others. Excluding this, the House bill represented a moderate reduction on the tariff of about five per-cent.

⁶ Taussig, Tariff History, p. 254.

Despite the great flurry of excitement over the new proposal in the fiftieth Congress, Bourke Cockran did not participate in the tariff debate.⁷ Instead he had selected as the subject of his February, 1888 maiden speech the dispute over the seating of a House member, James B. White. Representative White, a Republican from Indiana, had been charged with not having fulfilled the citizenship requirements for sitting in the House. White denied the accusations, claiming that he had become a citizen but that the records had gone astray.⁸ A committee, dominated by Democrats and created for the purpose of making recommendations on the matter, reported that White should be denied his seat. Cockran, intrigued by constitutional implications, spoke in defense of White because he believed the Democrats had acted illegally in passing judgment upon the decisions of the electorate. In an impressive argument Cockran pointed out that the evidence was inconclusive in regard to White's citizenship papers but that the true test of a man's loyalty to his country arose out of his lifetime activities. During the thirty years that White had resided in the United States he

⁷United States Congress, Congressional Record, 50th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), pp. 5, 376, 454. Cockran became a member of the Committee on Naval Affairs and the Committee on Land Claims on January 5, 1888. On January 10, he proposed an amendment to the Civil Service Law. He also introduced a bill to improve the channel at Sandy Hook, New York, to provide for the appointment of a commission for the purpose of deepening the New York Harbor. On January 13, he offered a resolution directing the Attorney-General to bring suit against the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company to grant the Billen's Clarke's Fork and Cook City Railroad Company the right of way through the Crow Indian reservation.

⁸Ibid., pp. 984-986.

had shown himself to be honest, and of good character. His community respected him.⁹ Under those circumstances the only ethical recourse for Congress was to accept White's oath that he had fulfilled the Constitutional requirements for serving in the House. If any criminal act had been committed, Cockran maintained, the responsibility for indictment belonged to a court of law, not Congress. Cockran then scolded his Democratic friends who thought of themselves as guardians of popular sovereignty, for questioning the decision of White's constituents in electing him to Congress. The sentiment in the House favored White and he retained his seat.¹⁰

Not until the fall of 1888 did Cockran indicate support of the Mills bill on the floor of Congress. He did so only indirectly when he defended it against Republican charges that it provided undue advantages to Great Britain and Canada to the detriment of the United States.¹¹ Cockran however had not remained silent outside of the Congress. In January 1888 he said that free trade remained a myth as long as government expenditures required the raising of revenue through high tariffs. During the presidential campaign of 1888 Cockran

⁹ Congressional Record, 50th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 991.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 986, 991. White claimed he had filed for naturalization on July 24, 1858 and received it in February 1865. When no one could find evidence of this (he found out the day before his election) he obtained new papers; New York Times, February 5, 1888, p. 1.

¹¹ Congressional Record, 50th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 9266-9267, 9273-9276.

spoke in favor of a reduced tariff when he asserted that the issue transcended all others in the nation. He assailed protectionists as wishing to build "a wall of protection around millionaire manufacturers" to enable them to force American people to guarantee business profits. He might compromise, he said, and support a tariff if it would give industrialists a "reasonable advantage" over their competitors.¹²

When Cockran returned to Congress at the end of 1891, he discovered strong divisions within the Democratic party not only on the tariff but equally over the currency question.¹³ In the years between his last service in the House of Representatives and the time he returned the tariff continued to be a major issue. In 1889 Republicans presented their version of a tariff bill and every Democratic senator voted against it.¹⁴ Festus Summers writes in William L. Wilson that

¹² New York Times, September 29, 1887, p. 4. At the New York State convention in 1887, Democrats declared that a reduced tariff would "relieve the people of unnecessary taxation." They also anticipated that the tariff would be a major issue in the 1888 election; January 14, 1888, p. 14, July 5, 1888, p. 4, July 16, 1888, p. 4, October 20, 1888, p. 1.

¹³ Ibid., October 11, 1891, p. 5. Cockran received the unanimous approval of his party to fill the late General Francis B. Spinola's seat in the House of Representatives. He took his place on December 7, 1891; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 52nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), p. 5.

¹⁴ New York Times, January 24, 1889, p. 4; Cockran to President Cleveland, February 1, 1889, Cleveland MSS. Cockran wrote to Cleveland that the Secretary of the Navy informed him that the right of the revenue measure would be raised by the Democrats in the House of Representatives and that Cleveland wanted Cockran to take part in the debate.

in 1890 the Democrats could not stem the tide of Republican pressure for the McKinley bill, a high tariff measure. The Republicans, in order to rally voting strength for it turned to the silver Democrats for aid, promised to return the favor by supporting the Sherman Silver Purchase bill.¹⁵ The silver Democrats came primarily from the newer western states where their political futures depended on success in getting the Sherman bill passed.¹⁶ As perennial debtors, farmers adopted an inflationist ideology and argued for greenbacks and free-silver. In the South and West they formed into the Farmer's Alliances in the 1880's. By the 1890's, in spite of differences between the two sections on a number of programs, they did unite on the silver issue. In the 1890 elections, Populists allied themselves with Democrats in the Northwestern States and sent several Senators and Representatives

Cockran answered Cleveland that he would be happy to do anything in his power to sustain the Administration down to the last moment of its existence and "you may be assured of my prompt response whenever you may be pleased to . . . ask for it."

¹⁵ Summers, William L. Wilson, p. 114; Paul Glad, McKinley, Bryan and the People (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1964), pp. 77-78. The difference in this law from the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 was that it directed the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase monthly 4.5 million ounces of silver bullion. The Treasury notes were to be issued in payment for the silver and they could be redeemed in either gold or silver at the discretion of the government.

¹⁶ New York Times, October 6, 1891, p. 4. The Times said that the Bland-Allison, the Resumption and Sherman Acts were passed in order to "court the unknown silver vote."

to Congress.¹⁷ In the Southern States the Farmer's Alliance controlled the Democratic organization. Free silver had become deeply rooted ideologically in their section.¹⁸

New York Democrats, on the other hand, comprised a strong anti-silver sentiment in the party. In their 1891 State platform, for example, they included a sound money plank, largely because they felt that they could not carry the State without it.¹⁹ In September, at Saratoga, the New York City Democrats condemned Governor David Hill because he had wished to straddle the silver question. Colonel Edward Hincken, a New York merchant and Democrat, informed the party leaders that New York business men favored a hard line sound money policy, and considered that any party which advocated directly or indirectly the free-silver coinage bill would invite defeat. He declared, "If the Democratic Party of this State is misled into such conduct it will be a calamity. Business won't have it."²⁰

Democratic leaders of the House realized that the outcome of both tariff and currency legislation would depend to a large extent on

¹⁷ Peter d'A. Jones, The Consumer Society: A History of American Capitalism (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1965), pp. 196-197.

¹⁸ Summers, Wilson, p. 115; Glad, McKinley, Bryan and the People, p. 77.

¹⁹ New York Times, October 6, 1891, p. 4.

²⁰ Ibid., September 15, 1891, p. 1.

the kind of Speaker they elected, the rules of debate and the composition of two key committees, namely the Coinage Committee and the Ways and Means Committee. The contest for the Speaker's seat was waged between anti-Cleveland, free silver Democrats who supported pliable Charles Crisp of Louisiana and the uncompromising tariff reformer, Roger Q. Mills, the candidate of free traders. With the aid of the Hill machine, the Tammany, Ohio and New Jersey delegations, Charles Crisp won. The New York Times reported that Crisp backers had selected him as a part of a subterfuge. He had always stood well on the tariff and could not be accused of intentionally betraying his party. The conspirators, however, would maneuver him into appointing their own members of the committees.²¹

The rules of procedure which the House would accept had similar political implications in regard to currency and tariff legislation. Between 1889 and 1891 new rules had been set down by the Republican Speaker, Thomas B. Reed. In order to determine the presence of a quorum, the Speaker could order the clerk to record all those present during the roll call whether they answered or not, providing they were in the region of the chamber.²² Since each

²¹New York Times, March 31, 1892, p. 4; Summers, William L. Wilson, p. 125.

²²L. White Busbey, Uncle Joe Cannon: The Story of a Pioneer American (as told by Cannon to Busbey) (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1928), pp. 171, 175-176. When the House met in December of 1889, the Republicans had a majority of four and after the death of one of their members it reduced to three. The Democrats tried to

Congress makes its own rules, however, this time (1892) the silverite minority wanted to change the Reed rules, and in addition, make sure that no limitations would be placed on filibustering. They had hoped to defeat the Committee on Rules recommendation that a time limit be placed on debates, so that their resolutions on monetary policy could be passed.²³

Strongly opposed to cheap currency, a free trader and an avowed proponent of the unalienable rights of the majority, Cockran argued against the attempts of the silver Democrats to introduce methods which he maintained would impede the orderly process of House business. He pointed to the filibuster as an obstructionist technique intended to usurp the power of those in command.²⁴ He denied that minorities had any constitutional guarantees. The only justification for their recognition could be found in the need to ascertain the majority. The dis-

block House business by not answering the roll call, thus preventing a quorum. Under the old rules the Speaker could direct the sergeant-at-arms to secure attendance of the absentees until they made their presence known by voting. On January 29, 1890 Reed directed the clerk to place on the rolls the name of members present, whether voting or not; Samuel W. McCall, The Life of Thomas B. Reed (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p. 171. A three day filibuster followed the Reed decisions. For weeks the House could not conduct its business.

²³ Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 674-677. The rule referring to the right of the Speaker to initiate a motion for adjournment was incorporated in the fiftieth Congress.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 682-684, 741.

grunted, he declared, perverted this intent in order to impair the voice and will of the majority.²⁵ Cockran directed his attack on those who remained silent during roll call, in order to prevent a quorum, because he believed they were attempting to nullify the processes of government and were indirectly using a form of filibuster to promote their own selfish interests. The very moment that the minority succeeded in securing special privilege, he said, they negated the essence of democracy.²⁶ On February 2, 1892, members decided to accept Committee on Rules suggestions on filibustering with the stipulation that the House vote on its acceptance.²⁷

When it became known after he returned to Washington that Cockran would be appointed to the all important Ways and Means Committee, critics accused Speaker Crisp of intending to use the New York Congressman as the instrument to block efforts to undo the McKinley Tariff. Cockran would be used, claimed the New York

²⁵ Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., p.684.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 741.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 773; McCall, Reed, p. 172. The Democrats used the same rule as Reed but added the use of two tellers to count the votes. The rule of present became the procedure used to determine the quorum (rather than a voting quorum). From this time on the House followed the procedure regardless of party in power; Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., p. 742. Cockran proposed a means to expedite the quorum. He moved that the House could embarrass a reluctant member into answering by bringing him before the bar of the House and in the presence of all be counted as present.

Times for the purpose of "devilling" plans of both revisionists who were "piece meal men" led by Representative William Springer from Illinois and a member of the committee and of the "general revision men" such as chairman William L. Wilson, Representative from West Virginia. Rumour held that the committee would not only refuse to undertake a revision but would neglect to report any bill that could provoke discussion of the effect of the change in the law.²⁸

Suspensions about Cockran's role can be attributed to his undistinguished record in the fiftieth Congress, his silence during the debate on the Mills' bill and his affiliations with Tammany which helped defeat Mills in the fight for the position of Speaker. Cockran's record in the fifty-second and fifty-third Congresses, however, would be memorable and ultimately many of the original doubts about him would be dispelled.

Once the procedural business was settled Representative Richard Bland, Democrat from Missouri and Speaker Crisp's choice as Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures introduced on March 7, 1892 a silver bill proposing the "restoration of silver to a parity with gold by the free and unlimited coinage of

²⁸ Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., p. 103. Among the members of the Ways and Means Committee were Serano Payne, Republican from New York, William Jennings Bryan, Democrat from Nebraska, William Dalzell, Republican from Pennsylvania, Thomas B. Reed, Republican from Maine, William L. Wilson, James McMillan, Republican from Michigan and William Springer, Democrat; New York Times, February 4, 1892, p. 2.

silver dollars."²⁹ Cockran wasted little time in attacking this proposal. As an eastern Democrat, an economic conservative, strongly influenced by the classical economic theories of Thomas Gresham, Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, to whom he frequently referred in his speeches, and in sympathy with the interests of the business community, Cockran sided with those members in the party who favored a sound money policy. He devoted his first major speech in the 52nd Congress to arguing against the Bland bill. He used the theory of Gresham that bad money drives out the good. He maintained that Bland's proposals would not actually establish a bimetallic standard even though it suggested a system of parity. Under the provisions of the legislation the country would be forced into a single, silver standard because the one metal would depreciate in value below the other. Silver, being the cheaper, would drive out gold, the dearer. Cockran accused the Representative from Missouri of deception. Cockran maintained that if Bland wanted a bimetallic standard, he should not have included the article giving the Secretary of Treasury the right to redeem notes in the metal whose circulation he wished to increase at a particular moment. Cockran declared that Bland's real motive was to impose on the United States to a cheap currency policy.

²⁹ Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 1890, 2838. Bland proposed the standard used before 1873. He thought it would give greater stability to the ratio between gold and silver (at 412-1/2 grains and ninety-one hundredths finess); New York Times, March 31, 1892, p. 4.

The effect would be to force people to accept payment for pre-existing debts in the inferior metal (silver).³⁰ Cockran said that the country would probably adjust to the silver standard but its effects would be detrimental to American commerce in general. The Bland bill would engender distrust because the settlements of debts with the aid of a "legislative bludgeon rather than by the redemption of the promises made by the debtor" would create havoc for American business. Free competition would be hampered by too much power in the hands of a government official, he said. The Secretary of the Treasury would be forced to determine the value of the currency every day in the year and every hour of the day, declared Cockran.³¹

Cockran's economic opinions mirrored those of most members of Congress, and expressed the traditional laissez-faire, sound money arguments which held sway in the late nineteenth century. In this sense Cockran contributed to the defeat of the Bland bill in the House of Representatives.³²

³⁰ Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 2839, 2841.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 2840-2841. The measure provided for the purchase of gold and silver bullion and the issuance of Treasury notes in payment for it--they themselves would become debased and degraded below the value of greenbacks.

³² New York Times, March 31, 1892, p. 4.

Cleveland's promises in his campaign to get on with tariff reform had to give way for the moment to the more urgent problems of coping with the panic of 1893. Shortly after he returned to the White House, after his unprecedented reelection in 1892, the stock market crashed (May 1893). In the weeks that followed, bankruptcies increased, prices dropped and a general financial and commercial dislocation took place. Although most of the failures occurred in the South and West, the New York banks faced a financial panic because the interior banks withdrew funds deposited there. The demand on the Eastern financial institutions reduced their reserves. By the end of the year close to 16,000 business institutions had failed. No part of the economy remained untouched. Samuel Gompers estimated the number of unemployed at about three million. In New York alone the number approached 70,000, with 20,000 homeless. During the worst months of this decline, the economy functioned at about twenty-five percent below capacity.³³

Most Americans did not understand this depression. Even the most eminent economists were unable to explain its cause. Agrarian radicals in the West and South blamed Wall Street and the money power, low prices, high freight rates, lack of credit, inadequate currency and corrupt government officials. The Populists demanded free and unlimited coinage of silver as the only solution. The gold

³³ Glad, McKinley, Bryan, and the People, p. 72.

reserve was subjected to unusual pressure while pessimism prevailed over the Treasury's ability to maintain the gold standard. Conservatives such as Cockran blamed radicals for undermining confidence in the American economy. Most of the experts, however, ignored the agricultural and industrial production problems as factors contributing to the depression. Almost all of them concentrated their analysis on monetary factors.³⁴

Currency, therefore, preoccupied the Congress throughout 1893. President Cleveland, in the same vein as Cockran, believed that silver laws encouraged speculation and were responsible for driving gold out of circulation and into foreign countries. Combined with the unfavorable balance of trade, he thought the Sherman Silver Purchase Act had become the major factor in creating Treasury difficulties. Cleveland had decided on that basis that only one course of action was open to him, and that was to call for the repeal of that law.³⁵ He had delayed dealing with the measure until after the international monetary conference at Brussels had arrived at some conclusions respecting bimetallism. Unfortunately, the conference failed to achieve meaningful results.³⁶ Cleveland called Congress into special session, on August 7, 1893, to carry out the repeal.³⁷

³⁴Glad, Bryan, McKinley and the People, pp. 73-75.

³⁵Cleveland to William Vilas, August 13, 1893, in Nevins, Letters of Cleveland, p. 330.

³⁶Summers, William L. Wilson, p. 157.

³⁷Glad, Bryan, McKinley and the People, p. 80.

When the House met, most of the members favored repeal. The New York delegation unanimously pledged itself in favor of immediate and unconditional revocation of the law and its policy.³⁸ In the House, Cockran also aided William L. Wilson, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Both worked unceasingly to defeat amendments presented by silver Democrats.³⁹

By the middle of August, many debates for and against Cleveland's recommendations had taken place. William Jennings Bryan, a Populist and member of the Ways and Means Committee, delivered one of the most eloquent addresses in favor of retaining the silver law. He accused the President of ignoring the needs of poor people, farmers and laborers by his misguided and misconceived request.

³⁸ New York Times, June 12, 1893, p. 1, June 14, 1893, p. 5, June 15, 1893, p. 5, June 17, 1893, p. 5, June 19, 1893, p. 5, June 20, 1893, p. 4, August 6, 1893, p. 1. In June this paper surveyed Congressional opinion on the repeal. Most of the legislators interviewed favored a sound money policy. Cockran said that he favored repeal and the limiting of government to stamping out precious metals and the testing of their weight. The consensus tended toward repeal of silver laws. The strongest support for the retention of them came from the Farmers' Alliances and Southern States and mining States. Of those interviewed, one hundred fifty members of the House favored repeal. One hundred seventy nine were needed to accomplish it.

³⁹ Summers, William L. Wilson, pp. 159-160. Congressional Record, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 512-516, 791-792. Prior to this activity, Cockran had devoted himself also to debates on new dates for the Congress and President to take office. He voted for old dates because he could see no advantages to the new recommendations. He also argued against new immigration requirements. He feared they would interfere with State powers (in this area) and also that they might discriminate against the poor.

With theatrical effect, Bryan applied the illustration to Cleveland by placing him in Napoleon's role and changing the order of retreat to one of charge. Bryan's oration appeared to impress his listeners as "more plausible than logical," wrote the Times. The newspaper accused him of saying things that passed for absolute knowledge only to the free coinage men who already approved of the arguments before Bryan began his address.⁴⁰

About a week after Bryan spoke before the House, Cockran made his contribution to the debate. He talked not only of currency but also of the meaning of business cycles and the causes of depressions. He disagreed with Bryan on his theory of inflationary currency and Republican Representative from Maine Thomas Reed's view that the business cycle was mysterious and inscrutable. Cockran said:

When we see ourselves surrounded by these grave perils, and realize that our condition cannot be attributed to the frown of Providence, we are forced to the conclusion that we must be suffering from the folly of man in the form of a vicious system of laws, which, in a time of bountiful production, has deranged and paralyzed the whole machinery of distribution.⁴¹

He asserted that every economic disturbance could be traced to "settled and well-defined causes," and that every crisis could be closely related to an unnecessary inflation or expansion of the currency

⁴⁰ New York Times, August 17, 1893, p. 2.

⁴¹ United States Congress, Congressional Record, 53rd Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 113, Appendix.

and credit. He pointed out that business conditions in the United States had not shown distressing signs in the past few months, therefore, the panic had to be attributed to no other cause than the operation of the Sherman Act, which had inflated our currency with questionable paper and driven good money from the country.⁴² Maintaining that it was impossible for the government to bring gold and silver to a parity, such as proposed in the sixteen to one ratio of the Bland bill, Cockran explained that under such a relationship the Treasury would have to store large amounts of silver bullion in the mints with resultant inflation and the gradual depletion of the gold supply.⁴³

Answering those Populists who called for inflationary policies in order to give advantages to debtors, such as the farmer and workingmen, Cockran turned the argument around through logical astuteness and indicated that bankers were the beneficiaries of inflation. He said, "the greatest debtors in the United States are banks." As dealers in other people's money they always owed something to someone. Thus with a debasement of currency, the debts due to them would be reduced and in turn their financial obligations to others would be reduced correspondingly. Any legislation, he declared,

⁴²Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 113, 116, 119, Appendix. He refers to Locke, Mill and Gresham. He also drew a comparison between all of the earlier depressions starting with 1837. Cockran says they were all caused by a "vicious monetary policy."

⁴³Ibid., p. 115.

which would degrade the standard of value would make the banks the gainer since their indebtedness exceeded their credits.⁴⁴

Cockran assailed the Populists for their charge of conflict of interest between the urban and rural regions of the country. The American economy, declared Bourke, functioned as an integrated whole where "the interests of the city can never be hostile to the interests of the country." Municipal wealth and prosperity, he continued, depended upon the productive energies of the workingman in the field and factory; both were the sole source of wealth.⁴⁵

Despite their struggle to keep the Sherman Silver Purchase Act alive, the Bryan clique lost and the Act became a thing of the past. On August 28, 1893, the House of Representatives voted to repeal it by a majority of two hundred thirty-nine to one hundred eight. In October, the Senate followed suit with a forty-three to thirty-two vote.⁴⁶ As a consequence, this conflict over cheap currency led to the dismemberment of the Democratic party for the next

⁴⁴ Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix, p. 116.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 120.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 117-118. The silverites maintained that the 1892 Convention at Chicago had promised a free silver plank. Cockran denied this. He said the delegates had refused to put in the word "free" before the word coinage. The promise of the Democratic platform was that they would use all of it (silver) if they could, and urge repeal of the purchasing clause of the Act, in order to enable them to carry the existing stock and in the hope that in the course of time they would be able to add to it without disturbing the progress of trade or debasing the standard of value; Merrill, Cleveland, p. 182.

few years and it offered no solution to the depression.

No sooner did Congress dispose of the Sherman act than they faced, once again, the tariff question. During the special session, there had been no attempt to deal with the tariff directly, but the preparations had begun. On August 21, 1893, William L. Wilson became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Committee meetings were carried on in secret. When Congress adjourned in November, the Committee continued to work on the legislation, and by the time the House convened in December the new legislation referred to as the Wilson bill was ready.⁴⁷

The Wilson bill permitted free entry of raw materials into the United States. This would lower production costs for American manufacturers, particularly those in New England.⁴⁸ The members also voted to include a personal income tax in their measure, largely because of pressure from Populist tax reformers and despite objections to it from the more economically conservative members such as Wilson, Clifton Breckinridge, Democrat from Arkansas, and Cockran.⁴⁹ Opponents accused the Committee of playing into the hands of the Bryanites and the agricultural sections of the South and the West.

⁴⁷ Taussig, Tariff History, pp. 284-289; Summers, William L. Wilson, pp. 160, 167, 172.

⁴⁸ Glad, McKinley, Bryan and the People, pp. 86-87.

⁴⁹ Summers, William L. Wilson, p. 173. Cleveland recommended a tax on corporate incomes but he did not support the income tax; New York Times, November 19, 1893, p. 4; Glad, McKinley, Bryan and the People, p. 87. The income tax was two percent on incomes over \$4,000.

The New York Times criticized the measure as a blunder for which the Democratic Party would ultimately suffer.⁵⁰

Cockran considered the income tax provision class legislation, and voted against this section of the bill. He thought the tax objectionable partly because it could become inquisitorial because of the questions one would have to answer on his income. He said that he would support a tax that was "made to fall on all the people."⁵¹

After listening to the many speeches in the House opposing the Wilson bill, Cockran spoke in its behalf. In January 1894 he delivered one of the most eloquent orations of his career, in favor of a free trade policy. He said that he had reached the end of his patience in listening to the Republican eulogies of protectionism. Contemptuously, Cockran referred to a high tariff policy as public robbery which provided no adequate means by which its spoils could be divided between its immediate beneficiaries and labor which assists them in "a war for higher protective rates."⁵² Striking at the heart

⁵⁰ New York Times, January 4, 1894, p. 4.

⁵¹ Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), pp. 2816-2817; Cockran to Champ Clark, May 17, 1918, Cockran MSS. In a letter to Champ Clark Cockran said that he did not oppose the levy of an income tax as such. He claimed that his opposition to that statute was that it restricted its operation to incomes exceeding \$4000 and it was based solely on the ground that a levy of a tax on some eighty thousand people was essentially undemocratic.

⁵² Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 2817.

of the argument, he maintained that high tariffs militated against the prosperity of a nation. Government favors of this kind bolstered essentially weak industries which would otherwise not succeed in the competition of the world market. He pointed out the uneconomic aspects of protectionism which diverted capital from regions of the world where it could be more productive.⁵³

Refuting the thesis that protection keeps wages up, Cockran explained that wage rates are determined by "the least possible amount of his own product that the laboring man is willing to accept." Continuing with the classical economic theory, Cockran maintained that the wages a man ultimately received depended upon how much he produced. He emphasized that it did not follow that the prosperous manufacturer would divert any increase in his profits to his employee's advantage. On the contrary, Cockran declared, the protected capitalist intended to break up trade unions as well as to hire the cheapest labor available. He said:

No matter how highly you protect the manufacturer, or how much money you allow him to make out of the people of this country, he will not pay \$3 a day to any American citizen for labor if he can get an equal amount of labor out of a Zulu, a Hottentot, or a Chinaman for \$1.75.⁷⁴

After attacking the deficiencies of protectionism, Cockran turned to the virtues to be derived from the Wilson bill. He promised

⁵³Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 1125, 1128.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 982, 1127.

it would "stimulate consumption," "quicken trade" and broaden commerce." Not only would it increase commerce and produce a budget surplus, it would also enhance income earning opportunities. For every dollar that would go into the Treasury, Cockran envisioned hundreds of dollars being collected by private individuals through increased prosperity. The Treasury would once again be in the black rather than suffer the deficit it now had as a result of the excesses of the Harrison Administration. Optimistic about the benefits derived from increased efficiency in trade and productivity, Cockran declared that commerce would grow as long as the country imported certain commodities and exchanged them against those items which America could produce more cheaply and better than other nations. The human race would be advanced. Those who traded with the United States would be solvent and America would reap the rewards.⁵⁵

Cockran's defense made a great impact on public opinion, as well as on Congress. Even Thomas B. Reed, a high tariff advocate, had to admit that no one could compete with Cockran in such a debate.⁵⁶ The Times reported that the people in the House galleries cheered three times during the delivery. The Speaker had to order the Sergeant-at-Arms

⁵⁵ Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 1123-1125.

⁵⁶ William A. Robinson, Thomas B. Reed: Parliamentarian (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1930), pp. 170, 267. Reed and Cockran had an interchange on the tariff on January 15th and 25th. Despite Reed's brilliance, Cockran's eloquence surpassed it; Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 858-860, 1527-1531.

to assist in curbing the enthusiasm. The newspaper claimed "it was a remarkable tribute to a remarkable speech."⁵⁷ The next day on January 15, 1894, an editorial commended Cockran further:

He is one of the few men in public life who unite brilliant oratorical power with solid reasoning and careful study, and he handles a subject on the floor with the art of an advocate and the breadth and penetration of a statesman. It is not difficult for almost any intelligent man, with a fair degree of reflection, to grasp the truth that freedom of commerce is the prime condition to the healthiest and greatest development of the industries furnishing the materials of commerce. But to apply that truth to the individual cases, to test the plausible pretexts for a departure from it by quick and searching analysis, and to maintain good temper in a process essentially cruel is a gift that few men possess as does Mr. Cockran.⁵⁸

The New York World reported that Cockran's speech had "dazzled the House."⁵⁹

The House passed the Wilson bill on February 1. In the Senate, however, it remained in the Finance Committee. The members added large numbers of amendments which increased the schedules. When the bill reached the floor the Senators added even more changes.⁶⁰ Crucial products such as wools, woolens, iron, coal and sugar required adjustments downward to help the economy. A lowered tax on wool for example would be a significant blow to protection.⁶¹ Although

⁵⁷ New York Times, January 14, 1894, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Ibid., January 15, 1894, p. 4.

⁵⁹ New York World, January 14, 1894, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁰ Taussig, Tariff History, pp. 289-290. Cleveland refused to sign the new bill known as the Wilson-Gorman Tariff but it passed and became law on August 28, 1894.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 291-292.

the House reduced the duty on woollens to a forty percent rate, the Senate raised that to fifty percent.⁶² The House had placed minerals such as coal and iron on the free list but the Senate retained the duties at a reduced rate.⁶³ The sugar tax received the greatest attention in and out of Congress. Sugar represented a monopoly to most Americans, and action on this article would be crucial for the Democrats who posed as the critics of trusts. Therefore, the Democrats in the House placed sugar on the free list. The Senate on the other hand restored the duty to satisfy the Senators from the beet sugar states.⁶⁴

Generally, the Wilson-Gorman Act made no far reaching changes in the character of tariff legislation. It lowered duties below those of the McKinley Law, but they remained above those of the 1883 tariff.⁶⁵ Cockran could not hide his disappointment. Although he had objected to the income tax provisions, he nevertheless wished to see the Wilson version passed because it offered an improvement over the 1890 law. After the tariff bill left the conference committee in almost the same condition it had left the

⁶² Taussig, Tariff History, p. 293.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 300.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 304-306; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 574. The duty on raw sugar was placed at 40% ad valorem, and on refined sugar at 1/8 of a cent a pound.

⁶⁵ Taussig, Tariff History, pp. 317-318.

Senate, Cockran exploded. He demanded that Speaker Charles Crisp expose the Democratic traitors who aided the Republicans in their emasculation of the original bill. It was too late, however, for such disapprobation. It could not help the Democrats. The New York Times accused Cockran of bad timing. His remarks were lost in the confusion.⁶⁶

Before he left Congress, Cockran had addressed himself to other issues such as amendments to gambling laws in Washington, D.C., changes in the National Banking Act and the Interstate Commerce Law. He directed his most ardent oratory against a renewed proposal on the national currency.⁶⁷ In January 1895, he criticized a measure which would provide for a new system of paper notes, and in turn would repeal the 10% tax on bank notes imposed in 1865. The effect would be to increase the paper money in circulation. The

⁶⁶The New York Times, August 14, 1894, p. 1.

⁶⁷Congressional Record, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), pp. 4871-4872, 6896-6897. The bill amended the Act of 1883 regulating gambling. Cockran, on April 24, 1894, said that this bill gave privileges to special groups. He objected to H.R. 3824 which repealed the ten percent tax on State bank notes. He said it would increase paper currency; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 53rd Congress, 3rd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), pp. 121, 127-129. H. R. 7273 amended the Interstate Commerce Act. It would provide for improved procedures by which disputes between the railroads and the Interstate Commerce Commission could be settled. Cockran supported it.

law proposed that the banks of the country purchase legal tender notes for the purpose of depositing them in the national Treasury and then issue three dollars in bank notes for every dollar of the Government notes so deposited. The supporters of the measure said it would be a way of retiring the greenbacks. Cockran said "this plan of issuing notes against a deposit of greenbacks would not return the greenback but it would make them the permanent basis of all circulating money." The promoters of the bill argued that a deposit of greenbacks in the Treasury would be a necessary precaution to secure the notes issued by the banks. Cockran said it would operate to prevent the banks from making proper provisions for the redemption of these notes. Cockran contended that a deposit of coins in the vaults of a bank would be better security for those notes than paper currency in the Treasury vaults. He viewed this legislation as another way of increasing the national currency. His answer to the supporters reveals his unswerving conviction that an inflationary monetary system would be detrimental to the economy and until there was a cancellation of greenbacks this country had "no room for a new and a healthy currency."⁶⁸

Cockran's reputation as a Congressman had grown also, particularly as a member of the Ways and Means Committee. His

⁶⁸ Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 3rd Sess., pp. 176, 179-180.

party had called upon him to play an active role in advancing legislation. The New York World, commenting on his talents even suggested that Cockran should become New York's Senator. The newspaper declared:

No member of either house has grown so rapidly as Mr. Bourke Cockran in the estimation of men here [Washington]. He is an orator of unusual force and oratory is much needed in the Senate. He has a fine presence, and fine presence counts here. He is a diligent and conscientious student who is apt to master a question when once he takes hold of it. Above all, he is a man of the type that grows with increasing responsibility.⁶⁹

Cockran assumed increased independence and developed closer ties with the Cleveland forces in Congress. This meant an inevitable break with Tammany. The unity displayed in the 1892 campaign among the New York State Democrats had disintegrated. Cockran, a hard money man and low tariff advocate believed that the success of the Democrats depended on Cleveland's policies and that his victory in the national election had "put the party where it is today."⁷⁰ Tammany, still smarting from old wounds and the hostility of the Cleveland supporters, drifted away from them and found allies in the Populists and silver Democrats. By 1894 the estrangement between Cockran and Croker became more apparent.

⁶⁹ New York Times, December 31, 1892, p. 4. This was reported to the Times from Washington. It refers to replacement for Senator Frank Hiscock. Murphy got the seat, however.

⁷⁰ Ibid., January 14, 1893, p. 4.

In January, 1894, when Croker came to Washington to confer with the Democratic members of the New York delegation on strategy to follow regarding the income tax provision of the Wilson-Gorman tariff, Cockran did not attend the meeting. He sent a message to the Tammany boss that he was too busy.⁷¹

In October, Cockran had informed the party that he would not be a candidate for Congress in the next election. He said that his law business had suffered by his continued absence from the city. Friends had tried to dissuade him from this decision but Cockran had made up his mind. The New York Times, upon hearing of this, commented that the New York Congressman had been one of the men who in the last legislative session had gained "a reputation as wide as the Nation, and his determination not to go back will remove from the halls of the House of Representatives one of its most conspicuous and most interesting figures as well as its best known orators."⁷²

Cockran, nevertheless, did not leave the arena of public debate. The currency issue had a great deal to do with this. Because of his sound money convictions, he became a very active

⁷¹New York Times, January 26, 1894, p. 2.

⁷²Ibid., October 9, 1894, p. 7.

participant in the 1896 presidential campaign. With the approaching Democratic convention, an overwhelming number of party leaders had decided to support a silver plank in the platform. The polarization on currency had become evident when sixty percent of the Democrats voted for a free silver measure in Congress but was more apparent when in the late spring of 1896 State conventions in western and southern states voted for "silver Democrats" as delegates to the Chicago convention. In May, the New York Times reported that leading "silver Democrats" throughout the country had been quietly informed by the Populists that if the Chicago convention adopted a free silver plank and accepted a candidate who would campaign for it both Populists and the Free Silver Party would join the Democrats.⁷³

In June 1896 New York Democrat John C. Tomlinson wrote to Cockran before the Democratic convention that the platform looked very much as though it would be one dedicated to silver. In that event,

⁷³ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, pp. 487, 492, 494. Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Virginia, Utah, Kentucky, California, and North Dakota counted among the most prominent of the free silver states. On June 23, 1896 thirty states had pledged themselves to silver. This meant 1065 delegates; New York Times, May 21, 1896, p. 2; June 19, 1896, p. 1. Silver men walked out of the Republican convention with Senator Henry M. Teller leading them; Horace Samuel Merrill, William Freeman Vilas: Doctrinaire Democrat (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1954), p. 228. In a number of western and southern states it seemed that unless the Democratic leaders endorsed free silver, their constituents would turn to the Populist Party.

Tomlinson said, "there will be a great desertion from the party in the East."⁷⁴ And as Tomlinson had anticipated, when the Democrats met in Chicago in early July, despite efforts by the New York delegation to temper the currency plank, William Jennings Bryan captured the convention with his famous words "you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." The silverites voted down bimetallism by a vote of 626-303. They also defeated a resolution asking for a vote of confidence for the Cleveland Administration. A vote of 564 to 357 rejected Cleveland's currency policies. Bryan became the party nominee on the fifth ballot and "free silver" emerged as the rallying cry of the Democrats.⁷⁵ On July 25, Bryan received the backing of the Populists, making him a formidable opponent to William McKinley, the Republican choice.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ John C. Tomlinson to Cockran, June 22, 1896, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁵ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, pp. 504-505; Joseph Rogers Hollingsworth, The Whirligig of Politics: The Democracy of Cleveland and Bryan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 45, 47, 59-63. Hollingsworth says that Whitney and Hill who led the bimetallism forces were too late with their proposal. The idea of a double currency was too complicated for the average American to understand. The basic shortcoming of the gold advocates was their inability to rally behind a "likely" candidate for nomination. They went to Chicago confused, troubled and with no single candidate or plan of action. The silver forces joined their battle with optimism and unity. The Bryan speech was crucial in bringing him the nomination but he had planned long before he came to the convention to capture it; Merrill, William F. Vilas, pp. 229-231. None of the orators at the convention was a match for Bryan. Bryan's speech was free from crassness and cheap demagoguery, says Merrill.

⁷⁶ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 507.

During these troubled days Cockran had been in Europe. In August when he returned, he decided to support William McKinley.⁷⁷ Cockran felt that those Democrats who had joined with the Populists had committed themselves to a "combination of lunacy and villainy."⁷⁸ He declared that all Democrats who favored sound money had the obligation to defeat Bryan. The sound money Democrats, Cockran suggested, should unite into one movement and hold a third convention at which they should put themselves on record against the Chicago platform.⁷⁹

A National Democratic Committee of sound money advocates did join together and met in Indianapolis on August 7 to prepare for a third party convention to be held on September 2, 1896. Not all gold Democrats, however, supported the formation of a third party.⁸⁰ Cockran among the opposition rejected a third party ticket because he doubted it would be able to defeat Bryan. Third parties, Cockran maintained, had no effectiveness in the American political system. Instead, he proposed that sound money Democrats support McKinley as an expression of their opposition to Populism.⁸¹ He cautioned

⁷⁷ New York Sun, August 3, 1896, p. 2 in the New York Times, August 4, 1896, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁸ New York Times, August 3, 1896, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Ibid., August 4, 1896, pp. 1-2. Cockran asserted that Tammany Hall blundered in endorsing Bryan.

⁸⁰ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 507.

⁸¹ Cockran to C. E. Sanford, August 7, 1896, Cockran Letter-book, 1896, pp. 708-709. Covington Commonwealth (Kentucky) August 5, 1896, Cockran Mss.; New York Times, August 3, 1896, p. 2.

observers that they should not construe his backing of McKinley as defection to the Republican party but rather to interpret it as his attempt to dramatize the incredible nature of the free silver movement.⁸²

The press responded with mixed reactions to Cockran's decision to favor McKinley. In Philadelphia, the newspaper, the Press said that since his break with Richard Croker, Cockran had lost his political position in New York and that there was no chance for him "unless he departed from the Democratic party and joined the Republicans; and it was doubtful whether, even as a Republican, he could gain such influence and high prestige as he enjoyed at one time in the Democratic party."⁸³ The Rochester Herald could not accept Cockran's rationale for his support of McKinley, commenting that the vote for McKinley might be a technically correct means for turning back the silver movement, but the election of the Republican would not necessarily put an end to the silver agitation. A number of observers pointed out that the cheap money majority in the Senate would not be decreased in the next Congress. They said that McKinley, a "fanatic on the question of the tariff" and formerly friendly to silver, would not be able to resist the "tiring-out policy of the silver Senate should it insist upon taking a free coinage rider

⁸² Rochester, Herald, August 4, 1896, Cockran MSS.

⁸³ The Press (Philadelphia), August 13, 1896, Cockran MSS.

to a Tariff bill."⁸⁴

A New Orleans paper, The States, attributed Cockran's bolt not only to disloyalty, but also to opportunism:

It appears that Mr. Bourke Cockran's announcement of his utter hostility to the Democratic national ticket of which he delivered himself on his return from Europe, did not set the political woods afire although it caused some joy in the camp of the McKinleyites.

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Tammany, for instance, does not hesitate to charge that Cockran has always been a secret, but none the less willing, servant of some of the largest corporations in the city of New York while posing as a tribune of the common people, and these corporations have summoned him home to aid in the election [of] . . . McKinley, to the Presidency.⁸⁵

On August 12, 1896, William Jennings Bryan addressed a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden. Although termed a failure in his appeal for New York votes, the Sound Money Democrats could not ignore the appeal of Bryan's accomplished oratory and his criticism of monopolists, money lenders and a government which gave privilege to the business interests over the large working population of the city. The Democratic Honest Money League, therefore, approached

⁸⁴ Rochester Herald, August 4, 1896, Cockran MSS; Thomas B. Reed to Cockran, August 14, 1896, Ibid., Reed was pleased that Bourke Cockran decided to support McKinley. He said, "I read your interview and was pleased with the good judgement you showed in every word."

⁸⁵ New Orleans, The States, August 6, 1896, Cockran MSS. They also accused Cockran of being paid for his speech against the income tax. They added, "but whether this be true or not the fact remains that the coming of the ex-Tammany orator has caused no consternation among Democrats."

Bourke Cockran to answer Bryan and to point out the dangers of his ideological contentions.⁸⁶

Cockran agreed, because he considered Bryan, Silver Democrats, and Populists a menace to American Institutions. Thereupon the Democratic Honest Money League planned a meeting at Madison Square Garden where Cockran would carry out this assignment.⁸⁷ Some of the press praised Cockran's decision. The Brooklyn Eagle, for example, hailed Cockran's return to the arena. "It is gratifying to see a man of his ability return to the field of public discussion and it would be even more gratifying to witness his return to public life. Mr. Cockran is a close student of our economic conditions. He has a brilliant record in Congress."⁸⁸

On August 18, 1896, William Bourke Cockran stood once again before a great audience. This time fifteen thousand came from the most prominent business and civic groups in the City to hear him give a most spectacular denunciation against William Jennings Bryan.⁸⁹ Point by point, Cockran took each one of

⁸⁶ New York Times, August 15, 1896, August 8, 1896, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Ibid., August 8, 1896, p. 2.

⁸⁸ The Eagle (Brooklyn) August 14, 1896, Cockran MSS.

⁸⁹ Speech of Hon. W. Bourke Cockran in Reply to the Hon. William J. Bryan, Madison Square Garden, August 19, 1896. Printed for the Democratic Honest Money League of America (New Jersey: Jersey City Printing Co., 1896), Cockran MSS. Pamphlet.

Bryan's theories and tore them asunder. Cockran asked the people to oppose the nominee because he had swept into prominence a wave of sectional hate "awakened by appeals to prejudice and greed." Cockran admitted that his opposition to Bryan might mean his own expulsion from public life, but he added that he would be "consoled and gratified by the reflection that it will prove the American people cannot be divided into parties on a question of morals or of common honesty." He denied that the American people would be fooled by Bryan's revolutionary appeal because American soil "is not propitious to revolution: that the people of this country will not change institutions which have stood the tests and experiences of a century."⁹⁰

The major portions of Cockran's oration were devoted to the explosive question of cheapened currency. He said:

I will concede that Mr. Bryan himself may believe that in some way or other, the adoption of the financial scheme which he supports would benefit the toilers of this country. . . . If Mr. Bryan could show me that by any means revealed to the comprehension of man, wages could be increased by act of government, I am ready to support him here and now. . . . I have never yet found one syllable which showed me how a Populist expected to increase the rate of wages.

He then addressed himself to the question of inflation and its effect on wages.

Mr. Bryan tells us that he wants to cheapen the dollar; that he wants to increase the volume of money. I do

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Speech of Hon. W. Bourke Cockran in Reply to Hon. William J. Bryan, p. 2, Cockran MSS.

not believe that any man who ever lived could quite understand a Populist's notion of what money is. . . . Nothing is more common in Populist oratory than the statement that the volume of money must be increased for the benefit of the people . . . which means, I suppose, that part of the people who run and manage and address Populist meetings.⁹¹

Cockran accused the inflationists of deluding themselves into believing that men can be enriched by "swelling the volume of currency." Since money's value depended upon people's confidence in it, said Cockran, it can be concluded that the present depression which had occurred in the United States could be traced to Populist attacks on the sound currency. Cockran warned that a Democratic victory would create a calamity but the one to suffer most would be Bryan. The "false prophet" who tore down the "temple of credit and of industry would himself be torn to pieces by an outraged people" whose prosperity he would ruin, maintained Cockran.⁹²

Cockran cleverly pointed out the differences between Populists and real Democrats. The former, he said, desired to cut down wages, while the latter wanted to maintain prosperity. Cockran accused the Populists of entering into a conspiracy with Western and Southern farmers (who had never adjusted to the loss of slavery)

⁹¹ Speech of Hon. W. Bourke Cockran in Reply to Hon. William J. Bryan, p. 3, Cockran MSS.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 4-8, Cockran MSS.

to promote cheap money schemes in order to reduce their costs, particularly through reduced wages. Bryan was merely the political instrument through which they hoped they could accomplish their objectives, claimed Cockran.⁹³

Accolades came to Cockran from many directions because of this most dramatic and emotional appeal for economic traditionalism. Henry M. Field, wrote to him, "I do not believe there is another man in this country who could hold fifteen thousand people spellbound as you did!" Field suggested that Cockran should speak every night till the day of election. If he could do so, Field said, "I believe you would do more than any other man could do to decide it."⁹⁴

On September 2, 1896 the gold Democratic Convention met in Indianapolis with delegates from forty-one states and three territories. Among the most prominent men there were William C. Whitney, Nathan Hewitt, August Belmont, Roswell Flower and William

⁹⁴Speech of Hon. W. Bourke Cockran in Reply to Hon. William J. Bryan, pp. 10-14, Cockran MSS.

⁹⁵Henry Field to Cockran August 19, 1896, Cockran MSS. Cockran to William F. Vilas September 1, 1896, Vilas MSS (Manuscripts Division of University Wisconsin Library, Madison). Vilas had complimented Cockran for his sound money position and his refusal to support Bryan. Cockran had known Vilas since the Cleveland Administration days. Cockran to Vilas July 7, 1893, Vilas MSS. Vilas had asked Cockran in 1893 to attend the Monona Lake Assembly in July of that year. Cockran had to refuse because of the extra session of Congress.

F. Vilas. They called themselves the National Democratic Party and nominated Senator John Palmer of Illinois for President and General Simon B. Buckner of Kentucky as Vice President. They gave a vote of confidence to the Cleveland Administration and attacked Bryan's silver platform as a violation of the constitution. One of their declared purposes was to draw votes from Bryan to McKinley in the border states. Cleveland took no active part in the movement but remained in the background.⁹⁵ Cockran also ignored the convention because of his commitment to McKinley. Horace Merrill in his biography, William F. Vilas, asserts that the gold Democrats found it impossible to conduct an impressive campaign, since the "real contest was between Bryan and McKinley," and that the work of the National Democrats and the Populists were "mere sideshows."⁹⁶

For his part Cockran could have returned to Congress because of his contribution to the McKinley victory. During the same month that the gold Democrats held their convention, which Cockran had opposed, the Republicans offered him a place on the local ticket. Thurlow Weed Barnes suggested that Cockran accept the Republican nomination to Congress for the 16th Congressional district in New York City. The offer came because the party leaders believed him to

⁹⁵ Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt, pp. 564-567; Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 508.

⁹⁶ Merrill, William Freeman Vilas, p. 239.

be a candidate strong enough to divert the constituents from their traditional Democratic position.⁹⁷ Cockran, nevertheless, remained a Democrat. He could not accept the nomination or any appointment to any office from a party whose principles he had always opposed. He wrote Barnes, "while the Democratic organization remains a party to the Populist conspiracy against wages, I shall labor untiringly for its defeat, but I will not consent to profit by its overthrow."⁹⁸

The gold Democrats and sound money men had their day of triumph with McKinley's victory. The conservative Democrats helped to bring about Bryan's defeat. In a total vote of close to fourteen million, McKinley received 7,035,638 while Bryan had 6,467,946. Bryan's electoral vote was 176 and his opponent 271. Palmer received no electoral votes and polled only 131,529 popular ones.⁹⁹ Cockran interpreted McKinley's victory as a vindication of republican government. He envisioned a new force of conservatism developing within the Democratic party which promised to protect American institutions against demagogues.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Thurlow Weed Barnes, to Cockran, September 5, 1896, Cockran MSS.

⁹⁸ Cockran to Barnes, September 9, 1896, Ibid.

⁹⁹ Hirsch, William C. Whitney, p. 509.

¹⁰⁰ Cockran, "The Forces of Patriotism Must Not Disband While Patriotic Duty Remains to be Performed," Address delivered at the Annual Banquet of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, November 17, 1896. In Annual Banquet of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, CXXVIII (1896), pp. 41-44, Cockran MSS; Glad, Bryan, McKinley and the People, p. 200. McKinley carried New York State.

Many times during his lifetime Cockran made decisions which militated against his own best interests. He had great faith in human logic and far too often assumed that people behaved rationally and consistently. Perhaps because of this faith in man's ability to recognize truth at all times, he felt he could admonish his fellow Democrats to support a man who had long been identified with a party and issues with which Cockran himself could not agree. It seems incredible that anyone so aware of political maneuvering could delude himself into thinking one issue could determine the total course of an administration's policies. Realistically, Cockran actually took a calculated risk. As an economic and political conservative he believed that the greater danger to the nation came from Populism and his only expedient posture in 1896 would be to support those elements which would defeat it. He wrote to Winston Churchill that he saw this as the only way to save Anglo-Saxon democratic traditions. Churchill, a young man but more realistic than Cockran, answered:

I wonder if you would care to calculate how much this years Presidential election has cost you--in dollars--considering for the purpose--not only the actual electoral expenses--but also the disturbance of business and the fluctuations of capital. . . . I am prepared to willingly admit--that no price was too much to pay--to smash Bryan and display to the world--on what firm foundations American credit and honour repose. . . . I know what a stalwart democrat you are. But look at the question philosophically--cynically if you like. Calculate the profit and loss. . . .

Yours may be the government for gods-ours. . . [is] . . .
of men.¹⁰¹

Although Bryan lost the election, he captured the Democratic Party. Within four years all but the most irreconcilable Democrats were back within the party organization.¹⁰² Cockran would be among them.

¹⁰¹ Churchill to Cockran, November 5, 1896, Cockran MSS; Winston Churchill, Amid These Storms: Thoughts and Adventures (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 52. Churchill said that he met Cockran in 1895 when he first visited the United States. He was met at the dock by Cockran "a great friend of my American relations, who had most kindly undertaken to look after me during my stay in the city." Cockran made a very strong impression on Churchill. He said, "I have never seen his like . . . his equal . . . " and that Cockran looked like the portraits of Charles James Fox.

¹⁰² Paul Glad, The Trumpet Soundeth: William Jennings Bryan and His Democracy (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p. 143.

CHAPTER V

COCKRAN: ANTI IMPERIALIST

1896-1908

The acquisition of the Philippine Islands and President McKinley's alignment with expansionists following the Spanish-American War caused Cockran to break with the Chief Executive. As an avowed anti-imperialist, Cockran became an outspoken critic of the United States colonial policies. He worked with organizations which exerted pressure against overseas expansion. Cockran considered foolish and morally wrong any nation's attempt to exploit people outside its realm. It did not matter to him whether exploitation applied to the United States in its hegemony over the Philippines, to Spain's determination to hold on to Cuba or to Great Britain in her attempts to subject the Boers to her control. Moreover, when Cockran called for American intercession in the Cuban and South African conflicts, he wanted this country to check the tide of imperialist adventures and its resultant oppressions.¹

¹Cockran, Speech on Imperialism delivered at the Academy of Music under the auspices of the Continental League, January 22, 1899. Stenographic report, Cockran MSS.

American participation in the War of 1898 for the most part stemmed from conditions not directly connected with expansionist motives. The Cuban challenge to Spanish rule and the latter's attempts to suppress it had developed over many years prior to the conflict. The year 1895 saw the most recent as well as the bloodiest and most tragic of the insurrections. American interest in Cuba's plight was to a large extent motivated by cruel treatment of the islanders by Spain.² President Cleveland followed a conservative policy toward the Cuban question but within a few months after the outbreak of the insurrection of 1895 the press had inflamed the Americans with exaggerated and one-sided reports of Spanish atrocities.

² George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 7-8; Henry Wriston, "A Historical Perspective" in John Plank ed., Cuba and the United States: Long Range Perspective (Washington, D. C., The Brookings Institute, 1967), p. 9. Wriston says that European subsidies on beet sugar and the American panic of 1893 combined to affect sugar prices. Coupled with the Tariff of 1894 these factors contributed to the worsening of conditions in Cuba and ultimately the insurrection. In February 1895, the Cuban militants set up a "republican government" in eastern Cuba while a junta in New York wrote propaganda to get money for the rebels. Spanish Governor General Valeriano Weyler contributed directly to the stories of the atrocities by his cruel treatment of the natives; David F. Healy, The United States in Cuba 1898-1902 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), pp. 7-9. Cuban cane sugar was hard pressed in the world market by the competition of European beet sugar, whose production was subsidized by the governments of the continental powers. Cuba hoped to solve this by seeking the United States market. In 1895 the three-year sugar boom in the sugar industry collapsed, to a large extent because of the Wilson-Gorman Tariff with its duty on sugar.

In the 1896 campaign the Republican platform called for peace in Cuba and ultimate independence for the people. While President McKinley tried to follow a policy similar to that of Cleveland and the tide of public opinion favoring the independence of Cuba precluded moderation.³

To some extent pressure on Spain emanated from groups within the United States which insisted on a more vigorous and dramatic form of intervention in Cuba. Among them numbered expansionist entrepreneurs who wished to see their property protected, and humanitarians. As early as 1896 several New Yorkers had revived an organization known as the Cuban League of the Ten Years War to bring attention to the Cubans' plight and to convince the Administration of the need for declaring a policy of protection for the inhabitants of the Spanish Island. Among the speakers at a rally held in Chickering Hall, in November 1896, William Bourke Cockran declared that "the time had come for the Government of the United States to state its position; to say if it intended to stand by and see a gallant people exterminated or if in the interest of civilization at large it intended to interfere."⁴

³Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), pp. 209-214.

⁴New York Times, November 28, 1896, p. 2. The League called the meeting to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the murder of eight Havana University students for a crime for which they were eventually absolved. Among other speakers and supporters were John

Although not a direct threat to American national security, Spanish atrocities shocked Americans and Cockran was no exception. As an influential Catholic layman, he acted as the personal representative of the Archbishop of New York, Michael August Corrigan, to the Vatican in March, 1897, to urge Pope Leo XIII to lend his good offices to mediate the end of hostilities in Cuba.⁵ After some delay Cockran had two audiences with Leo XIII.⁶ Cockran returned to the United States at the end of June, by which time conditions in the Island had worsened.⁷

Dos Passos, Charles Dana, Chauncey Depew, Alonso B. Hepburn, Edward F. Cragin; Statement of the "League of the Ten Years War" for the renewed life of the organization. December 17, 1896, Cockran MSS., March, 1898. The League pledged to support Cuban independence and to supply aid; Cockran to Henry R. Cobb, December 17, 1896, Letterbook #2, p. 901, Cockran to R. E. Haswell, Ibid., Cockran MSS.; William Appleman Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy (New York: A Delta Book, Delta Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), p. 34; Healy, United States and Cuba, p. 6. The period of the Ten Years War was one of intermittent upheaval which lasted from 1868 to 1878.

⁵J. Tomlinson to James T. Hoile, February 13, 1897, Letterbook #3, p. 59, Cockran MSS. Cockran left for Europe on February 13; New York Times, June 27, 1897, p. 5; Michael Augustus Corrigan to Cockran, September 25, 1897, Cockran MSS.

⁶J. D. Croke to Cockran, March 9, 1897, Croke to Cockran, March 10, 1897, Croke to Cockran, March 13, 1897, Cockran MSS. His correspondence deals with the delays which confronted Cockran while at the Vatican; McKinley to Cockran, March 9, 1897, McKinley MSS Library of Congress., McKinley to Cockran, March 9, 1897, Cockran MSS. While Cockran was at the Vatican, McKinley wired him thanking him for his support; New York Times, June 27, 1897, p. 5.

⁷New York Times, June 27, 1897, p. 5.

While President McKinley played a game of watchful waiting, sentiment in Washington grew in favor of intervention. Despite the pressure, notwithstanding all of the entreaties from influential Americans, he and Secretary of State John Sherman agreed to send General Stewart Woodford to Spain in July, 1897 to negotiate a peace for Cuba.⁸ In the fall of 1897, a more liberal government came to power in Spain.⁹ This encouraged the McKinley Administration into believing that a more satisfactory and speedy conclusion to the hostilities could finally be realized.¹⁰ Although autonomy had been granted to Cuba, by early 1898 no appreciable change had taken place in Cuba.¹¹ In January riots in Havana publicized by the

⁸ John Sherman to Woodford, July 16, 1897 in United States State Department, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States with the Annual Message of the President, 1898 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), pp. 558-559.

⁹ Sherman to Stewart L. Woodford, October 5, 1897 in For. Rel., 1898, p. 579.

¹⁰ New York Times, November 9, 1897, p. 1, December 29, 1897, p. 2. Spanish officials were not unaware of the pro-Cuban sentiment in the United States. They also were very mindful of growing pro-imperialist attitudes, as well. The Spanish Minister to the United States, Depuy DeLôme, commented on the question of American relief measures as a step toward intervention and an attempt to mix politics with charity.

¹¹ Sherman to Woodford, March 1, 1898 in For. Rel., 1898, p. 666. Sherman wrote that two months had elapsed since autonomy had been granted to Cubans and Marshall Blanco had replaced General Weyler as chief of the Spanish forces. He said that he had been unable to discern the favorable changes which had been anticipated; New York Times, March 28, 1898, p. 2.

American press forced the President's hand and he ordered the battleship Maine to that port, ostensibly to protect American interests. After the exposure of a letter of the Spanish Minister to the United States, Enrique Dupuy De Lôme, which described McKinley as a cheap, vacillating politician, followed by the explosion of the Maine in the port of Havana, public opinion favoring intervention became hard to quell.¹² Despite the fact the investigation of the Maine incident could not determine the cause of the tragedy nor place blame on Spain as the conspirator in this case, and that negotiations had begun to bear fruit, McKinley's course of action toward war seemed predetermined. The American press had done its share in exciting American emotions to a war pitch.¹³ Spain too had contributed by her slow response in bringing the insurrection in Cuba to an end. Moreover, Cubans contributed to American intervention by insisting that they would accept nothing less from the mother country than independence. On April 11, 1898 McKinley reluctantly sent a message

¹² Margaret Leech, In the Days of McKinley (New York: Harper Bros., 1959), pp. 165, 175. De Lome had been an appointee of the former Spanish regime (that of Canovas). He was respected for his reserve and energy in combatting propaganda of the Cuban junta.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 175-176, 180. On March 20, 1898 the Navy Department received a confidential message from Havana that the board of inquiry had reached the verdict that the Maine had been blown up by a submarine. On March 25, 1898, the Navy held a session to consider the conclusions drawn from the examination of the wreck and testimony. They did not fix responsibility, and concluded that no evidence of a Spanish conspiracy existed; New York Times, March 29, 1898, p. 2, March 30, 1898, p. 1, April 2, 1898, p. 8. Spain had ordered suspension of the concentration camps

to Congress calling for intervention to secure peace and to establish a stable government in Cuba.¹⁴ On April 18, after a week of emotional debate the Congress approved a joint resolution granting the President the power to use the best means to stop the war in Cuba.¹⁵ On April 20, 1898 the President signed the resolutions. The next day, after interpreting this as a declaration of war, the Spanish Government broke off diplomatic relations with the United States.¹⁶

On April 25, Congress formally declared that a state of war existed between the United States and Spain. Bourke Cockran received the news with approval. At a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria, he declared, "It is our duty to intervene in the affairs of a neighboring country, not for conquest, but to establish civilization." Cockran believed that this action constituted a duty for which "we do not pause to count its cost. Duty is duty."¹⁷ American intervention appeared to Cockran to be a lofty act, one that would benefit not

and prepared for peace; Day to Woodford, March 20, 1898 in For. Rel., 1898, pp. 692-693, Woodford to Day, April 11, 1898, Ibid., p. 749.

¹⁴ President's Reply to the Powers, April 6, 1898 in For. Rel., 1898, p. 741; Woodford to Day, April 9, 1898, Ibid., p. 746, April 11, 1898, Ibid., pp. 759-760; New York Times, April 18, 1898, p. 6.

¹⁵ Sherman to Woodford, April 14, 1898 in For. Rel., 1898, p. 761, Day to Woodford, April 19, 1898, Ibid., p. 762. Healy, United States and Cuba, pp. 23-28; Leech, McKinley, pp. 187-188.

¹⁶ Woodford to Sherman, April 21, 1898 in For. Rel., 1898, p. 766.

¹⁷ New York Times, April 28, 1898, p. 5.

only Cuba, but Spain as well, by terminating the connection which was disastrous to her and which spelled failure. The right to govern, he said, "does not depend upon the force with which it is maintained, but upon the purposes for which it is administered. The spread of civilization is declared to be the supreme end of government." For Cockran, it followed that since Spain's hold over the Island had been an impediment to civilization and could only be maintained through might, American actions constituted a surgeon's blade "wielded by the hand of a friend determined in separating" the misguided mother country from an expensive adventure.¹⁸

Cockran expressed the same sympathies toward the Boers of South Africa as he did toward the Cubans. He described the British struggle to control the Boers in the war of 1899 a "fearfully destructive conflagration. . . ." Cockran urged President McKinley to offer his good offices in mediating the conflict.¹⁹ On August 24, 1899 he wrote to McKinley who was on a holiday to "invoke the exercise of power which Providence seems to have placed in your hands with special reference to a danger now threatening the peace of the world."²⁰

¹⁸Cockran, "The American Soldier," Address delivered at Carnegie Music Hall, New York City, July 6, 1898, Cockran MSS.

¹⁹Cockran to McKinley, August 24, 1899, McKinley MSS.; New York Times, September 13, 1899, p. 1.

²⁰Cockran to McKinley, August 24, 1899, McKinley MSS.

Despite Cockran's entreaty the President did not act. In this case popular sentiment in the United States did not force the President's hand toward interference and American relations with Great Britain differed significantly from those with Spain. Between 1896 and 1899 relations between the United States and Britain had become increasingly amicable. Because of growing competition with France and Germany, and bereft of allies, Britain turned to the United States for support and friendship. America similarly looked to Britain, particularly after the interference in Cuba. European powers, jealous of the United States and fearful of the effects of her expansion, had tried to intercede with peace overtures during the Cuban crisis while Britain kept a discreet silence.²¹

Cockran, Democrat, Irish, anti-imperialist, and strongly opposed to an Anglo-American alliance, appealed to McKinley to "exert every moral force to preserve order" in the Transvaal. Denying that the South African question could be viewed as a purely domestic affair he denounced as an act of "criminal aggression" the use of military might to impose the conditions of government upon an independent country. He told McKinley that an Anglo-American alliance could not be "marked with respect" so long as the British continued to be the aggressor against a defenseless people.²²

²¹ Leech, McKinley, pp. 183, 185-186.

²² New York Times, September 13, 1899, p. 1; Cockran to McKinley, August 24, 1899, McKinley MSS.; Porter to Cockran, September 24, 1899, Ibid.

In order to harness popular support for the Boers and to bring about United States intervention, a number of prominent Americans formed groups such as the New York Committee to Aid the United Republic of South Africa and the Boer Relief Fund. Cockran worked with the latter and hoped that they could persuade the President to offer his good offices in the interest of peace.²³ Cockran also co-operated with the Boer Rescue Committee in its efforts to bring over to the United States Boer envoys who would tour the country and arouse sympathy in their favor.²⁴

In December 1901, after the assassination of McKinley, Cockran made a memorable address on behalf of the Boer Rescue Committee, urging the new President, Theodore Roosevelt, to offer aid in ending the war. As Cockran viewed the progress of events by 1901, he saw only two possibilities. Either the Boers must lay down their arms or Great Britain abandon her policy. He contended that the Boers would continue to fight until they bankrupted the

²³ New York Times, October 12, 1899, p. 2, January 30, 1900, p. 1. The New York Committee held a mass meeting at Grand Central Palace, January 29, 1900. Eight thousand people attended; Cockran to August Belmont, April 18, 1900, Letterbook #6, p. 248, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to George W. Van Siclen, April 18, 1900, Cockran MSS.; Ibid.; New York Times, June 26, 1900, p. 6.

²⁴ Goldwin Smith to Cockran, May 18, 1900, May 8, 1901, Cockran MSS.; Address by Hon. W. Bourke Cockran of New York, at the Boer Rescue Meeting, Chicago, December 8, 1901, in Proceeding of the Boer Rescue Meeting, Auditorium (Chicago: December 8, 1901), pp. 12-24, Ibid. (Pamphlet) The meeting was conducted under the auspices of the Chicago branch of the American Transvaal League.

British. It would be up to Britain to take some constructive initiative. They could never succeed in gaining the confidence of the South Africans even if they conquered them, because of the barbarity practiced by the British military.²⁵ The President of the United States, said Cockran, could be the instrument for bringing the African hostilities to an end. Without abandoning the traditional American policy of non-interference, he said, the President could not only offer his good offices, but, could also deny the British the use of United States ports or access to American military supplies. Informing the British Ambassador, through a friendly representative, that this country looked upon the South African campaign with "abhorrence" would awaken the British conscience to their evil policy. Public pressure upon the Joseph Chamberlain government would result in the abandonment of the "murder" of the Boers, and recognition of the Boer Republic should follow, declared Cockran. Any other settlement, he maintained, would be a "calamity for the whole human race," including the British. One word from Roosevelt, he said would be enough to arouse the conscience of the English people.²⁶

Goldwin Smith, the Canadian historian, and friend of Cockran suggested that perhaps Cockran made untenable assumptions. Cockran

²⁵ Cockran, Address at the Boer Rescue Meeting, December 8, 1901, pp. 12-15, Cockran MSS.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 23, Cockran MSS.

had no evidence that the Boers could continue to resist the British. He also relied too much on the difficulties faced by the British government in obtaining the financial support necessary to carry on its South African policy. The Government had a "huge mechanical majority in Parliament," said Smith. With respect to the British public, he said, those who filled the galleries and the music halls, were "the rabble of the cities," and did not feel the pinch of taxation.²⁷

Despite his failure to evaluate properly the practical aspects of the South African situation, Cockran aroused a great deal of enthusiasm for his ideas. The response was so great that Peter Van Vlissingen, chairman of the Chicago Boer Rescue Committee, told Cockran that Chicago had passed unanimously a resolution to invite Paul Kruger, the President of the Boer Republic, to the city as its guest.²⁸

Secretary of State Hay, on the other hand, took a dim view of Cockran's admonitions and the growing popular sentiment for American intervention. Montague White, a friend of Cockran, in an interview with Hay, had to reassure the Secretary that Cockran did not advocate military interference but moral suasion. Hay said

²⁷ Goldwin Smith to Cockran, January 24, 1902, Cockran MSS.

²⁸ Peter Van Vlissingen to Cockran, March 26, 1902, Ibid. ~~seen~~ MSS.

that the United States could not make herself vulnerable to a British rejection.²⁹

Democratic Congressmen attempted to introduce resolutions favoring intervention by the United States, but this met with strong Republican opposition. Vlissingen wrote to Cockran that under certain circumstances if Democrats could to into the districts of those Republican Congressmen who opposed intervention and by meetings and petitions get the cooperation of the constituents it would give the Democratic Congressmen an opportunity for a hearing on the different resolutions pending in Congress. He recognized the fact that no agency existed which could carry out such a maneuver.³⁰ Despite the speeches, resolutions and visits of Boer statesmen, the United States pursued a hands-off policy. The Boer War ended in 1902 with the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging. The Boer delegates approved of the peace terms which they formally signed at Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, on May 31. They agreed to British sovereignty over the Boer States but with the assurance that the British would eventually grant them self-government.³¹

²⁹ Montague White to Cockran, February 15, 1902, Cockran MSS. Montague White was formerly diplomatic agent of the South African Republic in England.

³⁰ Vlissingen to Cockran, March 26, 1902, Ibid., MSS.

³¹ Alfred F. Havighurst, Twentieth Century Britain (2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 64; Robert Charles Kirkwood Ensor, England: 1870-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 347-348.

Cockran's antipathy to strong nations exerting hegemony over weak populations, so clearly demonstrated in his attitude with regard to Spanish policy in Cuba and the British subjugation of the Boers, extended to the American policy toward the Philippine Islands after the Spanish-American War. The Treaty of Paris, signed on December 10, 1898, concluded the war and provided that Spain relinquish sovereignty over Cuba. The Spanish negotiators also agreed to cede to the United States Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.³²

Dewy's victory at Manila precipitated the debate between expansionists and isolationists. The question in everyone's mind revolved around whether the United States should establish a "quasi-independent" nation under its supervision or keep the new possessions as traditional colonies.³³ The decision to annex the Philippines became the turning point in this debate. The territorial acquisition in 1898 represented the first significant extension of United States sovereignty to important territories outside the continent of North America. For the first time sizeable areas had been taken by this country with no intention that they would ever be admitted as States.³⁴

³²Pratt, Expansionists of 1898, p. 345.

³³Williams, American Tragedy, p. 38.

³⁴Kennan, American Diplomacy, p. 14.

While many of his fellow Americans began to search their consciences about the justification for expansion, Cockran made his position clear in December, 1898. He unalterably opposed any decision to subject the Filipinos to American control.³⁵ Not only Cockran but other opponents challenged the McKinley Administration's policy on constitutional grounds. They rested their arguments on the Declaration of Independence and the proposition that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed. The proponents of annexation argued on the other hand that the Filipinos could not be considered in such a light because they could not govern themselves and that under such circumstances they would ultimately be invaded by stronger powers.³⁶

Protestant leaders who hoped to convert the Filipinos to their brand of Christianity had no inkling of the true nature of the composition of the people. For the most part Filipinos were Catholic with but a small number of Mohammedans [Moors] in the southern islands. American Catholics, although recognizing the need for United States coaling stations and defense posts, looked upon the religious fervor of the Protestant compatriots as a threat to and an

³⁵Cockran, Speech on Imperialism delivered at the Academy of Music, under the auspices of the Continental League, January 22, 1899, Cockran MSS.

³⁶Kennan, American Diplomacy, pp. 15, 18. Kennan writes that the alternatives to United States possession would probably be a tussle between England and Germany over the Islands with a reasonable likelihood that some sort of modus vivendi over the division of the Islands would eventually take place. The proponents also argued that sooner or later Japan would become involved. Ultimately this would be unfavorable to the interest of the United States.

assault upon the Philippine Catholic Church.³⁷

The Treaty of Paris which finally reached the United States Senate at the beginning of 1899 included provisions for acquiring all the islands of the archipelago.³⁸ In the months between the signing and ratification, a great flurry of anti-imperialist campaigning swept the country. Cockran acted as one of the chief orators opposing United States acquisition of the Philippines. Cockran had been out of the country on a European tour but even before his return home, anti-imperialists sought him out in an effort to defeat the ratification of the Treaty. The Continental League of New York, made up of the Central Labor Union, Irish, German and American societies had as its purpose the defeat of the Republican policy of expansion. John Devoy, one of the leaders of this newly formed organization wrote Cockran in New York that they would launch a campaign at the Academy of Music on January 23. He implored Cockran to speak immediately while the Senate debated the Treaty. He declared, "It is here in New York, where you live, that a speech delivered now would rally around you a fighting phalanx that might do much to shape the future."³⁹

³⁷ Pratt, Expansionists of 1898, pp. 309-312.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 335-340. McKinley had at first resolved to demand Luzon alone. He thought it offered the best economic opportunities. He was persuaded to acquire all of the islands because of their racial, economic and social integration.

³⁹ John Devoy to Cockran, January 22, 1899, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Plunkett, December 7, 1899, Letterbook #6, p. 123, Ibid.; M.F. Kerr to G. C. Bixler, December 11, 1899,

Cockran consented to speak. On January 22, 1899, he delivered a memorable address against the Treaty. He accused the proponents of annexation of appealing to the "sordid and sentimental, the patriotic and the materialistic instincts in America." In offering all things to all men, Cockran said, "they say in one breath, it is a scheme to promote civilization (that is for the patriotic, for the sentimental) and to the material and the hard-headed, they say that it will promote trade--that is to say there is money in it?"⁴⁰

Cockran challenged their optimistic claims that a new era of wealth and progress would come out of this policy. He defied any man to show him in a single instance where the powers of government have been exercised outside of the country governed, and where that nation had not sunk into decay. Cockran maintained that self-government constituted the only feasible way the Filipinos would learn to govern themselves. He denied the validity of the argument that people must be prepared for this. "Improvements begin when coercion ceases,"

p. 127, *Ibid.*; Devoy to Cockran, January 22, 1899, *Ibid.* MSS. Devoy had asked Cockran to speak after his return from Europe in 1899. There was to be an introductory meeting of the League before Cockran's return. At first they had hoped that he would be there to introduce to the world "in a great speech" the sentiments of opponents to American policy. Devoy told Cockran that practically all the organized Irishmen, Germans and Italians of New York City were behind them; William Temple Emmet to Cockran, January 20, 1899, *Ibid.* MSS.

⁴⁰ Cockran, Speech on Imperialism, Academy of Music, January 22, 1899, *Ibid.* MSS.

he said.⁴¹ To those who had argued that America must abandon her isolationism Cockran answered that he would be willing to abandon that old policy but only in cooperation with all other nations. He would never accept the proposition that in order to abandon such a tradition America must engage itself in the European type of conquest. Cockran declared, "I believe the gentlemen who are advocating the absorption into this country of ours of distant lands inhabited by alien races whom they themselves style, 'inferior,' are raising their hand against the best interest of this republic; and if successful, they will not merely plunge it into ruin, but will obscure the horizon of the whole human race."⁴²

With Senatorial debates over ratification becoming more heated and the intensification of the anti-imperialists campaign, demands increased for Cockran's oratorical talents.⁴³ In February, shortly before

⁴¹Cockran, Speech on Imperialism at the Academy of Music, January 22, 1899, Cockran MSS.

⁴²Ibid.,

⁴³Herbert Myrick, Vice President of the Anti-imperialist League and life-long member of the Republican Party, wrote to Cockran congratulating him on his stand. "It is a great encouragement to have you back in this country lending your powerful aid to this cause which means so much to American principles," he said. Myrick to Cockran, January 23, 1899, Ibid. MSS. Myrick was president and editor of the Orange Judd Co., publisher of agricultural weeklies and books, for Phelps Publishing Co. He was also treasurer of the American Sugar Growers Society.

the Senate consented to the ratification of the Paris treaty, he delivered a lecture at the University of Michigan at the Student Lecture Association. Many of the supporters of the new policy contended that American expansion had never been hampered by scruples about the consent of the governed and cited as examples Alaska, the Mexican Cession and the purchase of Louisiana. In his speech at Michigan, Cockran responded to this rationalization by making a distinction between the old and new approaches. He explained that the expansion of the past was a peaceful development of our political systems through the increase in the areas of the United States. He included Louisiana, Florida, Texas and California. The current brand of American imperialism, however, said Cockran forcibly, imposes on foreign countries restrictions illegal at home. It makes no provision to extend American constitutionalism but instead offers a different kind of government radically irreconcilable to the spirit of American constitution and from the provisions given to the earlier peoples who had come under this country's authority. Inimical to free institutions, the United States would have to maintain its supremacy by force and a standing army. Economically this policy would negate the sought after advantages because military occupation would crush labor's potentialities. It would remove the most able bodied men from the most productive industries to wasteful non-productive uses.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Cockran, "Expansion and Wages," Address delivered before the Student Lecture Association of the University of Michigan, February 4, 1899, pp. 1-5, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet) Cockran made reference to natural growth in expansionism. He described it

Cockran attacked the vague promise in the Treaty that the Filipinos would eventually have self-government. The tests for capacity for self-rule had to be definitely prescribed and limits of occupancy fixed, he declared. He proposed an alternative. He declared that the true test of civilization could be found in the power of a people to produce wealth. This country should offer the Filipinos the money paid to Spain for the Islands as a gift. Tell the inhabitants, he said, that the day they could repay it from their own productivity and at the same time are able to give satisfactory guarantees that under their government they would promote free trade, the United States would evacuate the Island and grant the Filipinos independence. Cockran pointed out that this plan would not only benefit the Filipinos, but the United States also. It would insure the politic of the "open door" to which the McKinley Administration had committed itself, and it would eliminate the need for a standing army.⁴⁵

as expanding for instance into Canada. He believed this to be beneficial to them as well as to ourselves. It would end disputes over boundaries and tariffs and prevent destruction of seal fisheries. Forcible annexation of Canada would on the other hand be an act of imperialism and unprofitable to both; Lyman to Cockran, January 23, 1899, Cockran MSS. Mayor Henry H. Lyman sent Cockran an editorial which appeared in the Montreal Star, "A Dangerous Kite." The paper represented an important segment of Canadian opinion. It took exception to Cockran's allusions to American expansion into Canada. The editorial declared that Canadians had no desire to be part of the United States; that they were in the British Empire to stay. Friendship between them and the United States depended upon the fact that this country understood that clearly. The editorial, nevertheless, praised Cockran's speech generally.

⁴⁵ Cockran, "Expansion and Wages," February 4, 1899, pp. 17-18, Cockran MSS.

The resolution of consent to the Paris Treaty by the Senate on February 6, 1899 by a vote of 57 to 27, with the support of fifteen Democrats, Populists and Independents.⁴⁶ While the chamber had been debating a number of resolutions on the treaty, an insurrection broke out in Luzon, on February 4, 1899.⁴⁷ The outbreak of hostilities caused much consternation at home. The Democratic press and anti-imperialists attacked the Republican policy as bankrupt. They demanded cessation of hostilities immediately.⁴⁸ Members on both sides of the Senate blamed each other for the course of events.⁴⁹ Despite these recriminations most people did not understand what conditions had brought about the insurrection. Filipino disillusionment with American policy had contributed a great deal to it. The Islanders

⁴⁶Pratt, Expansionists of 1898, pp. 358-360.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 345-346, 359. During the debates a number of resolutions had been proposed. The first and most extreme, introduced by Senator George G. Vest of Missouri on December 6, 1898, recommended that all lands secured by this country should be admitted ultimately as states. It met with defeat. At the end of the debates the Senate adopted the McEnery Resolution which provided that the question of the status of the Islands be left open. The House of Representatives turned it down. Almost all of the resolutions proposed came from Populists and Democrats. Senators Augustus Bacon of Georgia and George Hoar denounced the McEnery Resolution as an annexation plan in disguise and designed to protect Louisiana sugar growers from Philippine competition; Leech, McKinley, p. 357.

⁴⁸Leech, McKinley, p. 364.

⁴⁹New York Times, February 23, 1899, p. 2. Cockran dismissed the Senatorial debates as quibbling over when and how self-government should be granted to the Filipinos.

had hoped at first that they might become independent once the Americans routed the Spaniards from their land. Emilio Aguinaldo wrote in True Version of the Philippine Revolution that American military occupation in the Islands had threatened self-government for the Filipino people.⁵⁰

In order to determine the natives' readiness for independence McKinley had sent a five man commission headed by Jacob Schurman, to the archipelago. When they arrived in the Philippines the insurrection had already broken out. The only conclusion the commission could possibly arrive at under the circumstances was that independence would have to be postponed. The commissioners, nevertheless, recommended that civil government should be installed whenever conditions warranted it.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Don Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy, True Version of the Philippine Revolution (Farlak: Philippine Islands, September 23, 1899), pp. 43-48.

⁵¹ Leech, McKinley, pp. 363, 400. The commission included General Elwell Otis, Admiral Dewey, Schurman, Dean Worcester and Charles Denby. Otis contributed significantly to the failure to reach a peaceful settlement with the insurgents. He had refused their request for an armistice. Despite apparent disintegration of the rebel army as a result of Otis' intransigence they carried on a fierce guerilla war under the leadership of Aguinaldo. McKinley had sent 7,000 men to replace the original volunteer army after the outbreak of the Philippine hostilities; W. Cameron Forbes, The Philippine Islands (2 vols. Boston: Houghton Miffling Company, 1928), I, pp. 74, 119, 123. In August, 1899 Major General Elwell S. Otis replaced General Wesley Merritt as Military Governor of the Philippines. He remained in that position until May 4, 1900. The Commission arrived at Manila March 4, 1899, just one month after the beginning of the insurrection; Aguinaldo, True Version, pp. 46-48.

Meanwhile some Democrats thought that the question of American imperialism presented a real issue for the 1900 Presidential campaign. In September 1899, the Chicago Democrats held a mass meeting at which Governor John Peter Altgeld of Illinois, James P. Tarvin of Kentucky and Congressman J. J. Lents of Ohio spoke out against the Administration's policy. They denounced McKinley and praised Aguinaldo, the insurgents and the Philippine independence movement.⁵² The following month, anti-imperialists held a conference in Chicago at which they too denounced the Republicans. Among the orators, Cockran assailed McKinley and demanded immediate cessation of the Philippine conflict. Those who attended pledged themselves to the defeat of any person or party that stood for forcible subjugation of any people.⁵³

Finding no alternative to McKinley but Bryan, Cockran decided to endorse the Nebraskan as his choice for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Continuing to repudiate Bryan's 1896 silver platform, however, Cockran emphasized that he backed him because of his opposition to the United States colonial policy. Attesting to his own undying loyalty to the Democratic party, Cockran told a New York Times reporter, "I am neither a gold Democrat nor a silver Democrat, a Bryan or an anti-Bryan Democrat." He declared, "I am simply a Democrat."⁵⁴

⁵² New York Times, September 5, 1899, p. 3.

⁵³ Ibid., October 19, 1899, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., January 27, 1900, p. 1.

In February 1900 when Congress considered setting duties on commodities coming into the United States from Puerto Rico, Cockran cried out in anger against it. He asserted that the present Administration had no desire to govern the new colonies for the welfare of the inhabitants and that trade, rules placed against colonies vitiated the principles of free government. Conditions which allow limitless authority over millions of human beings, he pointed out, without responsibility for their welfare would ultimately undermine the American system itself. Legislation such as protective tariffs applied to a nation's possessions are inherently undemocratic because the weaker people have no constitutional guarantees, Cockran argued. Tariffs applied by independent nations have built-in safeguards which prevent them from degenerating into "barbarism."⁵⁵ "Love of humanity is scattered to the wind, and thirst for gain is acknowledged to be the controlling motive." when a nation embarks on imperialist ventures, maintained Cockran. He claimed that McKinley had betrayed himself when he undertook to pervert a war of humanity into a war of conquest.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Cockran, "In the Name of Liberty," Address delivered before the New England Anti-Imperialist League, Boston, February 23, 1900 (Boston: New England Anti-Imperialist League, 1900), pp. 27-28, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet)

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 14-15; New York Times, February 24, 1900, p. 3.

Faced with growing public criticism and impatience with his inability to settle the turmoil in the Pacific, McKinley, not unmindful of its effects on the coming Presidential election, decided to send to Manila a second commission, to be headed by William Howard Taft. Many critics asserted that McKinley did this not so much to review the findings of the previous commission but rather in response to public pressure and to find supporting evidence of the unpreparedness of Filipinos for self-government.⁵⁷ The Filipinos were suspicious and regarded all measures of self-government granted to them by an "altruistic" Congress as mere privileges and "a standing affront" to their intelligence.⁵⁸

⁵⁷James H. Blount, The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912 (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1912), pp. 286-292. Blount was an officer of the volunteers between 1899 and 1900, and district judge from 1901-1905 in the Philippines; Forbes, The Philippines, I, 124-125, Forbes said that the second commission was sent to carry out the policy of transferring military authority gradually to civil officers, and to organize and establish civil government. The members in addition to Taft were Vice-Governor Luke F. Wright of Tennessee, Dean C. Worcester formerly of the Schurman commission, Henry Clay Ide, formerly judge of the United States court in Samoa and Bernard Moses, professor of the University of California.

⁵⁸Moorfield Storey and Marcial P. Lichauco, The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), pp. 157-158; The New York Times, March 6, 1900, p. 3. Taft had said in March that the insurrection had practically ended and the United States had to consider the question of establishing a "just and stable government." He claimed to be opposed to expansion and that it was the "high and patriotic purpose of the President . . . to give the people of the Philippines the best civil government which he can provide" with the "largest measure of self-government consistent with stability."; Henry Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft (2 vols., New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939), I, 160. Pringle says that Taft opposed the taking of the Philippines at first, but after the act had been accomplished he felt it as a duty to give them good government. He did not agree

When the Democratic National Convention met in July, 1900 at Kansas City, the delegates declared themselves in favor of establishing a stable government in the Philippines and independence with United States protection of the Islands against outside interference during the period when they prepared themselves for self-government.⁵⁹ Anti-imperialists, not satisfied with the party's nominee for the Presidency, William Jennings Bryan, nor with the Republican candidate William McKinley, called a special congress to determine whom they would support in the fall. They thought they might even create a third party ticket as the gold Democrats had done in 1896.⁶⁰ Cockran refused their invitation to attend because of his opposition to third parties.

with Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts that the Filipinos were already able to run their own affairs. He also discredited the notion that the United States had violated the Declaration of Independence or that it was contrary to our traditions to govern other peoples. It is also interesting that Taft accepted his post reluctantly because he felt unqualified. He knew little of their history and could not speak the language of the Filipinos.

⁵⁹William Jennings Bryan, The Commoner Condensed (New York: The Abbey Press, 1902), p. 46; Leech, McKinley, p. 542. The convention met the first week in July. The majority of the delegates wanted to soft pedal the silver issue, but Bryan had insisted on repeating the demand for silver at 16-1. His running mate was Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois a silverite and formerly Vice-President during Cleveland's second term.

⁶⁰George S. Boutwell to Cockran, July 20, 1900, Cockran MSS. The meeting was held on August 15, 1900; Edwin Burret Smith, Chairman of the Executive Committee to Cockran, August 6, 1900, Ibid.

In his characteristic downgrading of their effectiveness, he argued instead that a more forceful and direct influence should be exerted on the existing party organizations.⁶¹ Anti-imperialists such as Stephen P. Anderton refused to accept Cockran's rationalizations about Bryan or about third parties. Anderton criticized Cockran as a traitor to the cause by giving in to the silver Democrats.⁶² Cockran replied that he had been misunderstood. He wrote, "you do me simple justice in assuming that while my conception of civic duty compels me to vote for Mr. Bryan on the issue of imperialism, my opinion on the paramount question raised by the Chicago platform remains absolutely unchanged." Cockran contended that hesitating because Bryan still retained his pro-silver sentiments was foolish. Since, he said, the Republicans would most likely retain their Senate majority for the next four years they would in all probability block any attempts by Bryan as Chief Executive to push through any silver bills.⁶³

As he had promised, Cockran campaigned for Bryan. He toured the country for five weeks, spending most of that time in the West, especially Colorado. The Democrats considered that

⁶¹Cockran to Burret Smith, August 14, 1900, Cockran MSS.

⁶²Anderton to Cockran, August 17, 1900, Ibid.

⁶³Cockran to Anderton, August 29, 1900, Ibid.

State crucial because the Republicans had decided to wage a vigorous contest on the question of imperialism. The Democrats selected Cockran as their best and most effective debater to present the party's position on the subject, while at the same time to dispute the Republican arguments.⁶⁴

Cockran's main thrust throughout the campaign was to characterize the Republican party as an unprincipled, opportunistic group of men interested only in promoting the ends of the privileged few. He contrasted the Democrats as representing true democracy, placing principle above gain, while the opposition would sacrifice any ideal rather than risk a single office. Typical of his oratory is such a statement as "Democracy is a faith, republicanism is an appetite." For Cockran, the Republican party advocated policies which would establish colonial empires, the imposition of protective tariffs and grants of subsidies from the public treasury so that a small number of the wealthy would benefit at the cost of the masses.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Cockran to James K. Jones, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee (Chicago) September 10, 1900; William M. Cain, Secretary of Democratic State Committee, (Omaha, Nebraska) to Cockran, September 14, 1900; Judge Adair Wilson, Members of Democratic National Committee for Colorado, (Denver) to Cockran September 24, 1900, Cockran MSS; Cockran to Moreton Frewen, November 5, 1900, Letterbook #6, p. 456., Ibid.

⁶⁵ New York Times, September 26, 1900, p. 1. An interesting sidelight to Cockran's campaign arose over a reported conflict between Croker and Cockran. The New York Times reported that Cockran wanted to campaign in the states of New York, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky in a private car. Richard Croker was said to have objected and called it a useless extravagance and that the orator was not entitled to travel in but an ordinary car. Bryan was supposed to have approached Croker about paying the expenses and an arrangement was made.

Despite Cockran's conviction that imperialism was the "real and only issue" of the 1900 election many Americans disagreed with him. Concern over the status of the economy, national currency, business and political corruption had increased. The party platforms reflect this. At Kansas City, the Democrats, in their platforms, assailed Republicans for encouraging private monopolies. In addition to his pet silver plank, Bryan insisted that the party include a statement advocating the direct election of Senators in order to increase popular control over the Federal government. Republican Mark Hanna, McKinley's campaign manager, planned to underplay imperialism and to emphasize the business recovery as the keynote of the campaign.⁶⁶

Congressman Richardson, however, denied that Croker was approached by Bryan men. Whatever the squabble might have been, Cockran started for Chicago on September 28, 1900, September 30, 1900, p. 2. Cockran addressed a throng of 12,000 in Chicago; Cockran, Speech delivered during 1900 Presidential Campaign, 1900. n.d. Typewritten, with emendations): Cockran MSS; Cockran to James K. Jones, Democratic National Committee (Chicago), September 5, 1900, Letterbook #6, p. 396, Ibid. It is unlikely that Cockran expected the Democrats to pay for this if one considers the following statement seriously. He told Jones that he would not accept compensation to campaign for Bryan. He wrote "I could hardly allow myself to draw on your meager resources even for travelling expenses which I can well afford to meet myself."; Cockran to Charles W. A. Vilas, March 8, 1901, Cockran MSS. Vilas asked Cockran to speak at the University of Wisconsin commencement on June 17, 1901. Cockran said that he never accepted remuneration for any addresses.

⁶⁶ Glad, The Trumpet Soundeth, pp. 59-60, 96, 144-146; Leech, McKinley, pp. 544-545.

With advice of gold Democrats such as Cockran, Bryan played down the currency question and embraced the moral mission of America. In areas where anti-imperialists' crusades failed to arouse any Republican sentiment, the Democrats assailed the promotion of private monopolies by the incumbents. But the Democrats failed to capture the American voter in the light of McKinley's appeal with the slogan of "a full dinner pail." Even Democrats voted for McKinley. On November 6, 1900, McKinley received 447 electoral votes against Bryan's 292, with a popular plurality of almost a million. Outside of the South Bryan carried only four silver-mining states, and did not carry his home state of Nebraska.⁶⁷

By the middle of 1901 the United States military government in the Philippines had been replaced by civil authorities. Aguinaldo had been captured in March 1901 and had declared his allegiance to the United States on April 19, 1901. The United States established civil government in July 1901.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Glad, The Trumpet Soundeth, pp. 144, 147; Leech, McKinley, pp. 544, 559.

⁶⁸Pringle, Taft, I, 196; New York Times, July 5, 1901, p. 1. MacArthur left the Philippines this day, following the installation of the civil government on July 4, 1901; Richard Leopold, Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1954), pp. 35, 37. The Organic Act was approved July 1, 1902. It set up the form of government for the Philippines. The second Commission was to continue the work already started in the organization of the civil government. On September 1, 1900 the civil government had taken over the functions of the military regime. The Spooner Amendment to

Following McKinley's assassination, Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt assumed office, and all of the problems that came with it, including the Philippine question.⁶⁹ One of the first problems with which President Roosevelt had to deal with in the Philippines concerned the settlement of the friars land holdings. On the island of Luzon eleven hundred fifty friars (Dominicans, Augustinians, and Franciscans) had resided. They had owned approximately four hundred thousand acres of agricultural land. During the insurrection of 1896 and 1898, those friars who had not fled the Philippines had been either dispossessed, killed or taken prisoner. Only about four hundred had remained.⁷⁰ Taft had proposed that the United States purchase the land, sell it at fair prices and easy terms to the natives, and rid the Islands of the friars. The latter had constituted an obstacle to paci-

the Army Appropriation Act of March 2, 1901 had empowered the executive to substitute civil for military rule. It was a temporary grant of authority to the President until the more permanent law could be passed. After the passage of the Act of 1902, Taft became Governor-General.

⁶⁹ William Henry Harbough, The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 181.

⁷⁰ New York Times, January 29, 1901, p. 9; Pringle, Taft, I, 223; W. Cameron Forbes, The Philippine Islands, II, 53, 57; Taft to Root, October 10-13, 1900, Letterbook, Philippine Comm., Taft MSS. Taft wrote Root that hostility of people to friars is real--due to the fact that they resented Spanish oppression.

fication and modernization of the Filipinos and their homeland.⁷¹

After an unsuccessful first attempt to negotiate the question with the Pope because the head of the Catholic Church refused to withdraw the friars from the Philippines, in 1903 Taft consummated the sale and purchased the land for the United States for \$7,239,888. The Pope also agreed to send the money to the Islands for rehabilitation of church properties.⁷²

⁷¹ New York Times, April 17, 1901, p. 6. Mgr. Chappelle, the Papal Delegate to the Philippines told Commissioner Taft that the friars would not return to the provinces and that only a small number would remain in Manila to instruct in the college; Taft to Root, September 26, 1901, Taft MSS. Taft wrote that if we could buy the friars lands in the provinces of Casita, Morong, Bataan, Cebu, "we should remove from our path . . . a tremendous obstacle." The tenants resented being ejected from the lands or paying rent to the friars. When anyone visited these provinces for the purpose of asserting any right of the owners to the land it created a riot. Taft had obtained provisions in the Philippine Government Act authorizing the purchase of the friars lands and the issuance of bonds to pay the cost.

⁷² Forbes, The Philippine Islands, II, 57-58; Grunder and Livezy, The Philippines, pp. 127, 129-130. The price Taft had paid was twice that of what it would have been four years earlier. Since the United States had taken over the Philippines, the price of land had soared. Taft had weakened his bargaining position by being overly anxious to reach an agreement; Pringle, Taft, I, 230-231. Archbishop Guidi replaced Chappelle in 1902. Taft thought him to be more reasonable on the friars question. The agreement finally reached in November, 1903 provided that tenthousand out of the four hundred thousand acres would be withdrawn from the sale. The money would be paid for the balance. The insular government would raise the cash through the issue of bonds. The land was to be sold in small parcels and on easy terms to native farmers, New York Times, June 8, 1902, p. 6, June 23, 1902, p. 8, July 11, 1902, p. 8, November 12, 1903, p. 8, December 17, 19-3, p. 5, December 24, 1903, p. 5; See Taft to Cockran, September 2, 1905, Cockran MSS.; Zwierlein, Catholics, pp. 49-55.

Taft's activities brought attacks from anti-imperialist Catholics. They objected specifically to his demand for the expulsion of the friars.⁷³ As a prominent Catholic, William Bourke Cockran received many appeals to intercede on behalf of the Philippines clergy who believed that the Roosevelt-Taft policy was intent on destroying their position in the Islands. When Cockran returned to Congress in 1904 these entreaties increased.⁷⁴

Taft, who had relinquished his post as civil governor of the Philippines to become Secretary of War in 1903, received complaints about conditions in the Islands, from Benito Legarda, Jose R. de Luzuriaga, and Trinidad H. Padro de Tavera, leaders of the Federal party and members of the Philippine Commission. In response to these entreaties from Legarda and his friends on the Commission, Taft decided to travel to the Philippines with a special group of observers, consisting of Congressmen and other government officials

⁷³Erving Winslow, Secretary of Anti-Imperialist League to Cockran, July 29, 1902, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁴Thomas A. Kendrick, Bishop of Cebu, Philippine Islands to Cockran, August 4, 1903, Cockran MSS.; Pringle, Taft, I, 247-248, 255. Padre Aglipai, leader of the Aglipayans started an independent Church movement. He had won many adherents because of Rome's refusal to withdraw the Spanish friars. The movement came into conflict with the Philippines Commission when Aglipai began to seize church property which allegedly belonged to the old regime; Thomas A. Kendrick to Cockran, August 4, 1904, Ibid.

to evaluate conditions there. They left in August 1905.⁷⁵

Cockran went along with Secretary Taft, Elihu Root, Speaker Joseph Cannon and fifty members of the official party. Roosevelt asked Cockran to go because he wanted him to inquire about the progress being made on the agreement with the Vatican to return the money paid for the friar's lands to the Islands. The President and Cockran agreed that if the money had not been returned as scheduled then the latter should not return with the travellers to the United States in October but should proceed instead to Rome and inform the Church officials that the United States was displeased over their failure to fulfill their part of the agreement.⁷⁶

Upon arrival in Manila, Cockran contacted the Catholic leaders there. The Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor, Ambroise Agius, informed him that the money would soon be returned with a Vatican representative.

⁷⁵New York Times, March 26, 1905, p. 3; January 29, 1905, p. 4; Forbes, The Philippines, I, 127, 168-169. The Federal party originated from the organized movement for peace in November 1900. Forbes wrote that the members came from insurgent leaders who became convinced of the beneficent purposes of the United States government as well as from their realization of the futility in continuing their armed resistance; For Tafe Young, Taft MSS. This communication was found among the Taft papers undated and unsigned but obviously written by Taft. The letter is dated [September, 1905 ?] but the folder is undated.

⁷⁶Cockran to Roosevelt, December 8, 1905, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, January 8, 1945, Ibid., Cockran met his third wife, Miss Anne Ide on this trip. Miss Ide went on the trip so that she might see her father the Vice-Governor. Cockran and Miss Ide were married the following year in November, 1906; Taft to Tafe Young, September 5, 1905, Taft MSS.

Cockran and Agius arranged that if the funds did not arrive before the Congressman had left for China and Japan, then Agius would cable him the single word "undelivered," or "delivered" if to the contrary. In the event that the first condition existed, Cockran would go on to Rome, otherwise he would return home with the rest of the party via San Francisco.⁷⁷

Cockran did not receive the message when he arrived at Peking and returned home with the party. Back in America he learned that a cable had been sent but, because he had neglected to inform the American authorities of his expectation, they refused to accept Agius' message. Unfortunately, the money Agius had awaited had not gone to Manila but instead to Spain, designated to build up the religious orders in that country. Cockran had missed his chance to intercede for the United States in Rome.⁷⁸

Communications continued to come to Cockran from the church hierarchy in the Philippines. The clergy had claimed to have been displaced from their living quarters to make room, first for the military personnel, and then for civil authorities. The latter

⁷⁷ Cockran to Roosevelt, December 8, 1905, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Agius had cabled on September 14, with the word "undelivered yet" because he had expected Father Martin Juan Ibonea to come to Manila in October or November with the money. On September 15th when Cockran inquired about the cablegram, he was informed none had arrived.

showed no better understanding of the clergy's plight than did the military, as demonstrated by their refusal to pay for the damages inflicted on the church property and for illegal seizures of its land, claimed Cockran's correspondents.⁷⁹

A major reason for the confusion could be traced to the failure of the Taft proposals. His policy with regard to the disposal of the friar's lands had not worked out as well as he had hoped. The money for the sale had not come in quickly and court cases were needed to settle the numerous title claims. Generally the land disposals took many years.⁸⁰ Island leaders and American anti-imperialists feared that American monopolists would obtain possession of the large undisposed friars tracts and would exploit them to reap large profits for themselves at the expense of the Filipino economic development.⁸¹

⁷⁹Jeremiah J. Harty, Archbishop of Manila, to Cockran, January 6, 1906, Cockran MSS. Enclosure also of an Address by Harty; Ambroise Agius Archbishop of Palmyra to Cockran, January 19, 1906, ~~Told:son~~ MSS. Agius complained that the Military Board had held a hearing on church claims and the clergy were disappointed in the board's recommendations and instructions to the War Department. Agius asked Cockran to make an appeal to Roosevelt and Taft. He felt that the board did not grant the church anywhere near the money damages that had been inflicted by the occupation. The clergy would have liked about one and one half million dollars; the amount necessary to begin the work of restoration.

⁸⁰Grunder and Livezey, Philippines, pp. 130-133; Forbes, The Philippine Islands, II, 59, 62, and 64; Harbaugh, Roosevelt, p. 182.

⁸¹Forbes, The Philippines, II, 90-91.

Cockran had succeeded in getting some settlement in favor of the Philippine church. He was instrumental in getting Congress to pass the Philippine Church bill and an appropriation of \$403,000 for damages made by the occupation army. Letters of appreciation for his help were received from Archbishop Farley of New York and from Archbishop Harty of Manila.⁸² Although the latter wrote and thanked him for the money he expressed disappointment in the amount received.⁸³

Cockran had become somewhat of a moderate in regard to Philippine independence. When in Manila, he had told an audience that he had originally opposed both the acquisition and retention of their country and if he had his way he would evacuate the islands "tomorrow." Equivocating, he added that he must recognize that he could not have his way. The decision to hold the Philippines had been decided by the American people in the elections of 1900 and 1904. Since the situation had been settled, Cockran said he saw

⁸²Archbishop of New York T. Farley to Cockran, March 6, 1908, Cockran MSS.

⁸³Jeremiah J. Harty, Archbishop of Manila, to Cockran, May 29, 1908, Cockran MSS. This was received by the office of William H. Taft on July 17, 1908. Harty said that the Philippine hierarchy had expected \$2,000,000; Grunder and Livezey, The Philippines, pp. 131-132. In 1911 the House Committee on Insular Affairs issued a report based on extensive investigation. The majority and minority report discredited the charges of malpractice in regard to the administering of the land laws in the Islands. The July 1, 1902 Organic Act was at fault and needed revision. The disposal of the friars lands would now follow a pattern different from that of public lands; Forbes, The Philippines, II, 59. The committee divided on party lines House Reports #2289, 61st Congress, 3rd Session. The matter came up again in 1912. It was defeated.

no reason for further agitation for independence at this time.⁸⁴

Cockran saw only one issue open to the Filipinos and that was the manner in which the authority of the United States should be exercised. Cockran agreed that vigilance would be necessary to assure economic benefits for the inhabitants rather than for the economic imperialists. He had confidence in Taft and Roosevelt because they had declared themselves in favor of "benevolent ends." Cockran doubted, nevertheless, whether the President and the Secretary of War would succeed in their goals because of the overwhelming forces in the United States in favor of "plunder." Being very strong economic expansionists, they could conceivably block any real attempts to deny them profits at the expense of the people.⁸⁵

Stubbornly, anti-imperialists continued to lobby in Congress for Philippine independence. They proposed that the members of the national legislature authorize the President of the United States to open negotiations with other nations for the purpose of securing the neutralization of the Philippine Islands, and the recognition of their independence whenever it should be granted by this country.⁸⁶ Cockran rejected the feasibility of this proposal and offered an alternative. In

⁸⁴ Cockran to Winslow, November 11, 1905, Letterbook #12, pp. 116-117, Cockran MSS.

⁸⁵ Ibid., November 11, 1905, Letterbook #12, p. 117.

⁸⁶ Winslow to Cockran, November 13, 1905, November 16, 1905, Cockran MSS.

order to convince the Filipinos of American sincerity in their promise of self-government, the Administration should as soon as possible withdraw the army of occupation. He reasoned that until this country took such action the natives would remain demoralized and the United States would be discredited.⁸⁷

In evaluating Cockran's part in the anti-imperialist protest, it is apparent that his role was not unique. Indeed, prominent individuals such as Andrew Carnegie objected to America's new expansion. Cockran's contribution was that, as one of this nation's most eloquent orators, he could alert people to the perils of overseas exploitation. To a great extent Cockran's forecasts of imperialism's dangers, not only to the colonials but to America itself have come true. More important was Cockran's role as a Catholic layman and his intercessions on behalf of his beloved church. His interests were primarily humanitarian, based on a very strong conviction that the Catholic Church represents a force for good in the world. The safety of the State lay in the strength of the Christian faith and sustaining this constituted the primary mission of the universal church. Cockran considered the philosophy of separation of Church and State as illusory. Catholic doctrine, he said, embodied every principle of equality included in the American constitution. The

⁸⁷ Cockran to Winslow, June 13, 1906, Cockran MSS.

Church and State, therefore, according to Cockran, were really interdependent. Because of the precepts of Catholicism, a good Catholic had to be a good citizen. Agreeing that the United States could not be expected to support an established Church, he said, nevertheless, that the Church "must always support the State." Cockran's intercessions on behalf of the Philippine church were based on the conviction that to discriminate against it would in the long run mean another step in depriving people of a most civilizing force.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Cockran, "The Church and State: Influence of Christianity Upon the Progress of the World." A lecture delivered by Cockran, under the auspices of the United Catholic Association for the benefit of the Employment Bureau, Academy of Music, Baltimore, March 19, 1893. Cockran, "Church and State," Address at the First American Catholic Missionary Congress, November 18, 1908; Cockran MSS.

CHAPTER VI

RETURN TO NEW YORK POLITICS 1897-1908; SECOND

BREAK WITH TAMMANY

During the years between 1897 and 1908 Cockran participated in New York local and State affairs by making speeches and by writing resolutions, platforms and other material for the Democratic Party. Although he did not return to Tammany Hall until 1902, the national Democrats, Republicans and reformers prevailed upon Cockran as an independent to speak for their respective candidates. Notwithstanding the dissent which characterized his anti-expansionist sentiment, Cockran remained a conservative Democrat in domestic matters. His suspicions of radicals and of unorthodox or untried ideas tended to make him a moderate with respect to proposed reforms of the established order.

Meanwhile the power and influence of the State Democratic Party had declined markedly between 1895 and 1904. Except in New York City and in a half dozen upstate municipalities, Democratic candidates had failed to win elections and in many localities no

recognizable party organization existed.¹ Republicans, led by boss Thomas Collier Platt, however, had risen in power, filling the vacuum left by their opponents. Most significantly, Platt exercised complete control of the New York State legislature during the years 1895-1899.²

In order to gain control of New York City, the Republicans sponsored the Greater New York bill. In the general election of 1894, residents of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Long Island (and a number of out-lying towns) had voted favorably for the referendum to consolidate the City. In the Spring of 1896, the Platt machine politicians proposed creating Greater New York, comprised of five boroughs, Manhattan, The Bronx, Queens, Richmond and Brooklyn. A charter commission headed by Benjamin F. Tracy, as President, and Seth Low, as chairman of the Committee on Draft, completed its work in December 1896, in time to make the 1897 mayoral election the most significant in the City's history.³ At that time, the metropolitan population numbered 3,250,000. It was a heterogeneous group of which only nineteen percent was made up of white native American male voters, while the

¹ Robert F. Wesser, Charles Evans Hughes: Politics and Reform in New York, 1905-1910 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 70.

² Harold F. Gosnell, Boss Platt and His New York Machine: A Study of the Political Leadership of Thomas C. Platt, Theodore Roosevelt, and Others (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 54.

³ Gerald Kurland, "Seth Low: A Study in the Progressive Mind" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1968), pp. 91-92.

rest of the people came from foreign backgrounds. The Civil Service list included 35,000 people with a payroll of \$40,000,000 a year. The budget of the municipality, annually, added up to \$100,000,000. A new mayor for this expanded city would take office in 1898.⁴

Because William Strong, the outgoing mayor had refused to run for re-election, independents and reformers decided to create a new political party known as the Citizens Union. They carefully worked out a platform which called for new tenement house laws, added school construction, the extension of parks and playground facilities and an eight hour day for city employees. To cut down public utilities' charges, they proposed municipal ownership of city water supply, gas and electricity.⁵ Seth Low, a former Brooklyn mayor and President of Columbia University, headed the ticket. Thomas Platt felt that Republicans would do better without a reform administration and when the Citizens' Union refused to promise him patronage in exchange for his support, nominated as Republican candidate his son's law partner, Benjamin Tracy, former Secretary of the Navy. Tammany named Robert Van Wyck, a Bryanite.⁶

⁴Kurland, "Seth Low," p. 97; New York Times, February 16, 1897, p. 3; Steven Swett, "The Test of a Reformer: A Study of Seth Low, New York City Mayor, 1902-1903," The New York Historical Society Quarterly, XLIV (January 1960), p. 6. Seventy-five percent of the population were immigrants or of immigrant parents. The Charter would take effect on January 1, 1898.

⁵Wesser, Hughes, pp. 19-20.

⁶Garrett, LaGuardia, p. 39; Gosnell, Platt, p. 232; New York Times, September 26, 1897, p. 3.

Cockran wrote an open letter to the press denouncing Van Wyck as the Democratic choice. He stated that the New York Democracy would be destroyed by the unwholesome forces which had taken over the party. He declared, "if Bryanism be tolerated . . . his supporters will remain in undisputed control of the Democratic organization . . . " Bourke pleaded for Tammany to reject the Populism of 1896 as they had Henry George and his ideas in 1886.

Cockran assailed the Citizens Union and Low for a platform which only vaguely and superficially referred to the problems that had beset the City as a result of its accelerated growth. The fusionists made no specific proposals on how they would clean up the docks, the sewer system, and the long neglected beaches. In regard to municipal ownership of public facilities and utilities, Cockran held that the City could not run them more efficiently than private corporations. Instead of Low's plan, he suggested a government-business partnership with limits on profits which could be "derived from the successful operation of the enterprise to an amount which while it would be an ample reward for industry and inventive skill, would turn all profits beyond such reasonable compensation into the Public Treasury."⁷

Cockran doubted that public officials could administer utilities such as the telegraph, the railways, and gas manufacturing as economically as the specialized and relatively expert private management. If

⁷ New York Times, September 26, 1897, p. 3.

operating costs were to increase because of the inefficiency of unqualified public personnel, they would have to be passed on to the public through higher rates or taxes. Moreover, the constitutional authority of municipalities taking over these functions required settlement in the courts before the application of any plan for action. To Cockran the suggested public take-over seemed too remote to serve as a remedy for current, pressing problems.⁸

Cockran believed that statutes already existed which could curb corporations from taking undue advantage of consumers. One of the most effective required publicity on all contracts which private business exercising public franchises entered into. This meant that every one of their legal agreements would require public scrutiny. For the violators, prison punishment would not be too harsh.⁹

After Cockran delivered his diatribe against Seth Low, the New York Times criticized him for hair splitting and aligning himself with Boss Platt. The editor accused him of opportunism. He wrote that Cockran, talented and ambitious needed an "employment so to speak for his abilities." The quarrel with Tammany "whisked away"

⁸ The Civic Federation of Chicago, Speeches of W. Bourke Cockran and William J. Bryan (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley and Sons, Co., 1900), pp. 7-8, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet) Cockran delivered this speech at the Chicago Conference on Trusts, September 15, 1899; Letter from Albany to Cockran, August 11, 1899, Ibid., MSS. Governor Roosevelt sent with him Chauncey Depew, John F. Carlisle and Dr. Albert Shaw. The Civic Federation of Chicago sponsored the meeting between September 13th and 16th.

⁹ Cockran, Speech at the Chicago Conference on Trusts, September 15, 1899, p. 15, Cockran MSS.

his economic and professional opportunities, therefore, it was easy to understand why Cockran joined Platt instead of Seth Low's Citizens Union. The Times concluded, "in the bleak atmosphere of non-partisan government a politico-legal practitioner would starve. He must have a boss" ¹⁰

Notwithstanding this harsh criticism, Cockran stubbornly held to his decision and campaigned for Tracy. Indeed, for the first time in any municipal election since 1894, he addressed a large audience. Also, as in the past, the listeners enthusiastically acclaimed him, the New York Times reported that the hall was filled to capacity but until Cockran's oratory aroused them, the crowd seemed more like a theater audience than a political assemblage, wrote the reporter. ¹¹ Cockran warned his listeners that this election would have far reaching effects on the national scene. If either Van Wyck or Low won, Bryan would become the Democratic presidential candidate in 1900. Cockran accused the Citizens' Union of basing its nomination of Low upon three false assumptions: first, that all political parties are corrupt; second, that Low's experience and character preeminently qualified him for the top office of the city; and third, that since Low had no political commitments to any national party, he could carry out his functions untrammelled by any

¹⁰ New York Times, September 30, 1897, p. 6.

¹¹ Ibid., October 30, 1897, p. 1.

issues other than those of immediate concern to the city. An experienced and practical politician, Cockran discredited this form of reasoning because it ignored the fundamentals of successful political action. No mayor could succeed without strong party backing and the power to control patronage. To underrate the relationship between local and national politics seemed the height of folly to Cockran.¹²

Despite all the rhetoric neither the Republicans nor the Citizens' Union could loosen Tammany's grip over New York City, and Robert Van Wyck won. Analysis would indicate that the Citizens' Union could not overcome the handicap of the public's associating it with the previous reform administration under William Strong. He had taken the unpopular step of increasing taxes in order to carry through his program. Some conservatives withdrew their support from Low's party because of the proposals for public ownership and the special aids promised to the working class.¹³

For their part the Republicans needed a broader based fusion organization to win in New York City elections. Tammany's appeal to the labor vote and the lower class rank and file, based on charity along with personal contact and involvement, could not be matched by

¹² New York Times, October 30, 1897, p. 1.

¹³ Kurland, "Seth Low," pp. 130-131..

the Republicans. In exchange for its gifts, favors and promises, the Wigwam asked for and got the votes of the City's poor.¹⁴ Boss Croker, not Boss Platt, had New York City at his feet.

With the victory, the decline of Tammany set in rapidly, however, The Wigwam had reneged on its promises to labor. The leaders became less and less responsive to the needs of the masses. The offices of the City were filled with "deserving Democrats." Expenses increased and reform remained a wishful dream. Corruption increased more than ever.¹⁵ Not even Tammany could overcome the loss of confidence that ensued.

Croker's attempt to interfere with the judiciary in 1898 aroused tempers of civic minded New Yorkers. The Tammany boss had threatened the independence of the courts when he had instructed the New York County Democratic Judiciary Convention not to renominate for the State Supreme Court Judge Joseph F. Daly. The justice had served for twenty-eight years. He had refused to appoint Croker men to the subordinate offices in his court room. Outraged at

¹⁴Irwin Yellowitz, Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 181-182.

¹⁵Werner, Tammany Hall, pp. 461-462.

Croker's audacity, the Bar Association, joined by many prominent New Yorkers, organized a mass meeting at Carnegie Hall, in October, to register their protest. James C. Carter, leader of the Bar and chairman of the gathering, selected Cockran as the main speaker.¹⁶

Cockran denounced the evils of bossism although never once mentioned Croker's name. Tampering with the judiciary, said the orator, meant a loss of constitutional guarantees. A boss, whose position existed outside the law, knew no bounds but as long as he could not touch the "bench," no real harm could come to the people. Nevertheless, defining the limits of a chief executive by statute would render an honest elected official impotent. In practice the boss encompassed all the functions of government. As a single individual, he ruled the destinies of the Democratic Party in the City, declared Cockran. Cautiously, Cockran denied knowledge of the boss ever having accepted bribes in the form of political contributions from contractors, employees or corporations. Cockran denied that he knew anyone who had been oppressed or injured by Croker. Cockran feared the potential danger of such a man, nonetheless.

¹⁶Werner, Tammany Hall, pp. 468-469; McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 180-182.

The origins of this unique control, Cockran maintained, stemmed from the faulty political structure which had developed in American cities. He rejected the notion that bossism had grown out of democracy. On the contrary, Cockran denied that the two could flourish simultaneously, as history had shown. The major protection that citizens had against boss rule, Cockran said, could be guaranteed through inviolate courts. With an independent judicial system nothing worse could happen than that a few individuals who had once been in favor with the despot would incur his displeasure and be excluded from the inner circle.¹⁷ Despite the vociferous outcry against Croker, his candidates for the judiciary won and Justice Daly and his two associates, William N. Cohen and Henry W. Taft lost their seats in the supreme court. In the State campaign for the Governorship however, Theodore Roosevelt defeated the Democratic candidate Augustus Van Wyck.¹⁸

By 1899, Tammany's troubles increased rapidly. The Mazet Committee, created by Republicans and directed at the Hall, came to New York City to uncover corruption. The investigation revealed a white slave traffic on the lower East Side. Acting Police Commissioner William S. Devery, a Tammany man, had transformed the

¹⁷ Cockran, "Independence of the Judiciary," Speech delivered at a Meeting Held at Carnegie Hall in Support of the Independence of the Judiciary, October 21, 1898, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet)

¹⁸ McGurkin, Bourke Cockran, pp. 186-187.

Department into a shake-down and blackmail ring for the advantage of his friends in the organization. Gambling houses paid regular fees to wardheelers for guaranteed protection from the police. In March 1900, the New York Times revealed a report showing that the sums collected from gambling alone added up to \$3,500,000 per year. Prostitution provided equal profits.¹⁹ The Mazet Committee recommended revisions of the City Charter as a means of eliminating these and other abuses.²⁰

In 1901 Cockran addressed the City Club of New York in which he denounced Tammany rule. He proposed that the people unite against the Hall as a primary step toward change. New Yorkers who wished to organize outside the regular party should define their aims precisely and the conditions under which they could be achieved. Reformers should then present a program to the people at the polls. He reminded the City Club that it would not be difficult to prove that municipal government had become a "monstrous parody on civic

¹⁹ Kurland, "Seth Low," p. 145; Harold Syrett, ed., The Gentleman and the Tiger: Autobiography of George Brinton McClellan, Jr. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1956), p. 167. (footnote)

²⁰ Kurland, "Seth Low," pp. 95-96. In 1900 Governor Roosevelt ordered a charter revision commission to carry out the Mazet Committee's proposals. In June 1900, Seth Low advised the Commission that the Mayor's office should be changed to a four year term, to guarantee honest government and to give the chief executive a chance to carry out reforms. He also recommended a single police commissioner and a unicameral legislature for the city.

administration, and that it is the supreme duty of civic patriotism to overthrow it so completely that no one stone of the odious system will be left. . . ."²¹

Justification of a combination of citizens outside the regular political organization, Cockran said, would require that they demonstrate that too much governmental control had been vested in a single unelected private individual (meaning the boss). He referred to the speech he had given a few years earlier in which he attacked Croker's rule. Cockran apologized this time for being too moderate in describing the effects of bossism. Dictators of past history, Cockran declared, appear mild in relation to this present day autocrat. Whereas the former could never escape the verdict of posterity the modern boss could escape observation even while exercising power because no means existed by which his share in public affairs could be ascertained. He could assume credit for any act of his administration which had proven popular, while at the same time denying any responsibility for the evils which the public condemns.²²

Cockran proposed a plan to free the city of autocratic control. Advocating home rule, he explained it as a means by which political

²¹New York Times, May 25, 1901, p. 1. Among those present were John D. Crimins, Alfred Conkling, Everet Wheeler, Rev. Dr. Silver, J. Nobel Hayes; Cockran, Speech Against Tammany and Bossism, May 25, 1901, Cockran MSS.

²²Cockran, Speech Against Tammany and Bossism, May 25, 1901, Cockran MSS.

power could be distributed throughout the city in small blocks of districts. The larger city would be divided into boroughs made up of wards which would comprise thirty election districts. Each ward would administer those elements over which it had the most immediate interests, such as paving, cleaning and lighting the streets and police protection. The borough would deal with affairs more directly affecting the various wards combined, such as parks, sewers and docks. The greater city would have exclusive control over communications between the boroughs. A council would govern each ward. Representatives from each of the election districts would make up that body. Cockran maintained that this distribution of power into subdivisions would prevent a single individual from building up too much power. The recommendations did not come to fruition.²³

Reform sentiment reached a new peak in New York in 1901, when independent Democrats, Republicans and the Citizens' Union created the Fusion Party. Overly close connections between both major parties and business caused individual Democrats and Republicans alike to join the Fusionists. They turned the spotlight on the lower East Side following the exposure of corruption there. Henry Codman Potter, Episcopal Bishop of New York, and organizer of the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor; and

²³ Cockran, Speech Against Tammany and Bossism, Cockran MSS.

the Women's Municipal League rented an office on Delancey Street. They organized a staff of public speakers and canvassed the district, house by house. The party's candidate for district attorney, William Travers Jerome, opened his campaign in two empty rooms above a saloon and stumped the slums nightly.²⁴ Dissatisfied with the slow progress of labor under Tammany rule a number of labor leaders favored the ousting of Croker and the Tammany gang. While the Democrats had shown good voting records during 1898 and 1900 in support of doomed labor bills in the State legislature, the Wigwam had weakened the existing laws by poor enforcement. The dissidents within organized labor, thereupon, turned their allegiance to Low, the Fusion candidate for Mayor.²⁵

By the summer of 1901, Richard Croker realized that it would be next to impossible to elect a Tammany ticket in the fall. He had decided to look outside the party for his mayoral nominee. He chose the highly esteemed corporation lawyer from Brooklyn, Edward F. Shepard.²⁶ Shepard, who had voted for Low in 1897, had decided to

²⁴Moses Rischin, The Promised City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 228. The committee of Fifteen conducted the campaign to expose prostitution on the East Side.

²⁵Yellowitz, Labor, pp. 166-167.

²⁶Syrett, Gentleman, p. 167. Hugh McLaughlin, boss of Brooklyn wanted to nominate Bird S. Coler, a former city comptroller and banker who had opposed the Ramapo Water Company, a private corporation in which Democratic and Republican politicians had invested money. Mayor Van Wyck intended to award the company a contract which would have cost the City about \$5,000,000 a year.

accept the Democratic nomination because he believed that, once elected, he could defy the Tammany clique, and reform the party from within.²⁷ Shepard also objected to Low's accepting Platt's endorsement, which he considered a revelation that the Fusionist was really a partisan Republican.²⁸

Cockran refused to support Low. Instead, he threw his support to Shepard whom he believed could succeed in doing what he promised. Jacob Cantor, a lawyer, and independent Democrat, wrote to Cockran urging him to support the Fusion ticket on which Cantor was running for President of the Borough of Manhattan. He agreed that Shepard had ability and character but he rejected the idea that he could escape from the power of Tammany. Low on the other hand, Cantor pointed out, could be the wedge needed to unseat Croker. More significantly, the Fusionist Borough President could rid the Police Department of its corruption because the new charter gave the responsibility for hiring personnel for public works to him rather than

Coler blocked it; Werner, Tammany Hall, p. 471. Shepard had been an ardent advocate of civil service and ballot reform. With William J. Gaynor he had been instrumental in sending the Democratic boss of Coney Island, John J. McCane, to jail for stuffing ballot boxes with illegal votes.

²⁷ Kurland, "Seth Low," p. 174. Shepard made no deals with Tammany.

²⁸ Syrett, Gentleman, pp. 167-168. George McClellan said that he had asked Shepard to repudiate Van Wyck who was running for governor and to announce that he would not retain William S. Devery as Police Commissioner. Shepard refused.

the mayor. Cantor said that with the Hall defeated, the honest and able Democrats such as Cockran and Shepard could organize the party into an efficient and honorable organization as Tilden had done when he ousted Tweed.²⁹

Matthew Breen too had little faith in the Tammany ticket. He told Cockran that the slate reminded him of that "ancient statue which had a head of gold, a body of lead, and feet of clay."³⁰ Despite these entreaties, Cockran remained intransigent in his faith in Shepard's ability to revitalize the Democracy.³¹ In his public addresses, Cockran declared that Fusionists could do not better than Shepard. While he concurred with their opposition to boss rule, Cockran said he could not in good faith support their mayoral candidate because he had not repudiated Platt. Shepard, notwithstanding his acceptance of Croker's nomination, had promised to use all of his power to purify the City with honest, "righteous" and independent administration. Low had made no such commitment against the Republican leader.³²

²⁹Jacob Cantor to Cockran, October 11, 1901, Cockran MSS.

³⁰Matthew Breen to Cockran, October 11, 1901, Ibid Cockran MSS.

³¹Cockran to Shepard, October 18, 1901, Ibid Cockran MSS.

³²Cockran, Speech in Favor of Edward M. Shepard's Candidacy in the New York Mayoralty Campaign, Carnegie Hall, October 25, 1901 (New York: Independent Citizens' Committee of One Hundred of Brooklyn, 1901), pp. 1-2, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet)

Regardless of his record, good character and the confidence of Cockran, the tide of progressivism denied victory to Shepard. On November 6, 1901 Seth Low carried a complete Fusion ticket with him to success. This included the Board of Aldermen, the five borough presidents, three of the four judicial seats in the State supreme court and all of the county officers.³³ The fact that Croker had selected Shepard, indicated that he knew that the electorate wished to see a new day in the governing of the city. The campaign had been a distinguished one. George Peabody wrote to Cockran that Shepard had carried on a commendable crusade and that Cockran had contributed appreciably to it. The small margin of defeat (15,000 votes), pointed out Peabody, had attested to the fact that had the election taken place two weeks later many of the alienated Democrats might have come back into the party and a victory for Shepard might have occurred. Notwithstanding these post-mortems, Peabody declared his confidence in Low's ability to succeed in bringing about reform because of the many Democrats on his ticket.³⁴

Richard Croker had to resign because of this overwhelming rejection by the people of New York. On January 12, 1902, he stepped down as Tammany leader. He named as his successor, Lewis Nixon, a former naval officer and engineer, with a reputation for

³³Swett, "Seth Low," p. 19. Low received 296,813 votes to Shepard's 265,177.

³⁴George Peabody to Cockran, November 19, 1901, Cockran MSS.

ability and honesty.³⁵ Croker did not relinquish actual control, thus making it difficult for Nixon to alter conditions in the organization. Five months after his accession, the latter, unable to work with the district leaders because of Croker's interference, resigned.³⁶ The New York Times maintained that Nixon's decision signified defeat of the forces for decency within the Hall. As soon as Nixon had ventured to test his own strength against that of Croker's he had had to give up.³⁷

In September 1902, Charles F. Murphy, a quiet, long-time member of Tammany and known for his enigmatic personality, took control. By this time Cockran had returned to the Wigwam. Indications that he might do so appeared as early as February, 1902, when he attended a Tilden Day dinner.³⁸ He delayed until Richard Croker, was ousted and his followers completely subjected to Murphy's power. With the new leadership and new men running Tammany, Cockran pictured an important role for himself in rejuvenating the party. Nonetheless, cautiously, Cockran withheld overoptimistic

³⁵ New York Times, January 12, 1902, p. 1.

³⁶ Syrett, Gentleman, p. 168-169. The executive Committee then chose a triumvirate to manage. It included Charles Murphy, of the East Side, Daniel McMahon, of the West Side and Louis Haffen of the Bronx. Before long Murphy absolutely dominated his colleagues and they resigned in his favor.

³⁷ New York Times, May 21, 1902, pp. 1, 8.

³⁸ Ibid., February 16, 1902, p. 1; September 20, 1902, p. 1. Charles Murphy was elected leader of Tammany Hall in September.

predictions for change for the good in the organization's quality. He feared that lack of popular interest in the management of parties might conceivably preclude any improvement. He wrote to Moreton Frewen, the Irish nationalist economist:

What all this may portend I don't undertake to say, but I have never for a moment been shaken in my firm belief that while the decadence of politics seems to make the ground under one's feet somewhat uncertain, the progress of the race will continue and all things are ordained to promote it.³⁹

As a public-spirited citizen, Cockran though he could work constructively to bring about the progress of civilization, but the effort had to take place within the Democratic organization. Outside, he could do nothing, as the last nine years had proven to him.⁴⁰

A number of Democrats welcomed his return. John McIntyre, a Tammanyite and lawyer, wrote him in June, anticipating Cockran's decision. "I rejoice at the prospect of your return to Tammany Hall. . . . The time has come when Tammany Hall needs the presence of a big man-one who can inspire confidence within and without. It is your type of manhood that is required at this time to aid us out of the undesirable position which we have occupied for many months past."⁴¹ Ambrose Purdy, told him, "I believe you will

³⁹ Cockran to Moreton Frewen, September 26, 1902, Letterbook #8, pp. 360-370, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁰ Cockran to Frewen, September 26, 1902, Cockran MSS.

⁴¹ John McIntyre to Cockran, June 20, 1902, Ibid.

find your true sphere of political activity in the organization as now conducted."⁴²

The test for both Cockran and Tammany came in the 1903 mayoral election. Charles F. Murphy had urged George McClellan, Jr., Harvard graduate, well-to-do patrician, and son of the Civil War general, to be the Democratic candidate. The Republicans had nominated Seth Low and Murphy wanted a contender equal to him in stature, as well as a platform designed for reform and honest government. With a face lifting, he hoped Tammany could play a more significant role in national and State politics. The Wigwam had never been able to appear to advantage in the larger political arena. It always had to overcome the handicap of suspicions that it might trade away the interests of the Democratic Party for local partisan advantage. If Tammany could endorse a reform ticket and cleanse itself from taint of deals with the Republicans, it might be able to create for itself a new and brightened image. Under these circumstances, they might even exert an influence on the selection of a presidential candidate for 1904.⁴³

In October, Murphy had succeeded in getting his platform

⁴² Ambrose Purdy to Cockran, July 5, 1902, Cockran MSS.

⁴³ New York Times, September 3, 1903, p. 3, September 4, 1903, p. 1, September 28, 1903, p. 6. The district leaders supported McClellan.

adopted by the city Democrats after a dispute with Hugh McLaughlin of Brooklyn. The latter had threatened to bolt if he could not have his own candidate Judge William J. Gaynor, run for Mayor. Murphy much to the anger of the Brooklyn leader included in his slate such independent Democrats of the Low administration as Edward A. Grout for controller and Francis V. Fornes for president of the Board of Aldermen.⁴⁴

On this occasion Murphy approached Cockran and "begged" him "to carry McClellan to victory." Cockran said a few years later, in an interview, that the outlook had been dubious but others had also urged him, so he consented.⁴⁵ In his campaign for McClellan Cockran emphasized the virtues of the Democratic Party. He attacked Low for running as a Republican, and attributed to the former Mayor an ideology which assumed that only the select, educated few of the upper class should run the government. Cockran considered this inimical to democracy. "All men," he declared, "who are free from crime are good enough to share in the burdens as well as the benefits

⁴⁴ New York Times, October 2, 1903, p. 1. The deal to support Grout and Fornes made it look as if Murphy were in favor of the Low Administration; Syrett, Gentleman, pp. 169-170. Hugh McLaughlin presented Gaynor because he thought that the judge who was popular in Brooklyn could carry the borough and the city to victory. McLaughlin asserted that a Brooklyn Democrat could be a better contender against Low. McClellan, however, received the nomination.

⁴⁵ New York American, March 18, 1908, Cockran MSS.

of government." In contrast to the aristocratic idea that government should stand upon a narrow base, he said, true democracy rests on the broad foundation of universal suffrage and opportunity for all to partake in its leadership.⁴⁶

Cockran made a rather serious error in accusing the Low administration of increasing taxes and insurance rates over those of the previous administration.⁴⁷ The New York Times reprimanded Cockran for this because the Board of Fire Underwriters and the Fusionists presented evidence that the opposite had actually occurred.⁴⁸ Usually careful in his research, Cockran slipped this time by not checking the figures which Lawson Purdy, the secretary of the Tax Reform Associates, had given him. Despite the difficulties which Cockran inadvertently created McClellan won the election with 314,782 votes against Low's 252,086.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Cockran, Campaign Speech in Support of McClellan's Candidacy for Mayor, October 22, 1903?, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁷Ibid.; New York Times, October 23, 1903, p. 1.

⁴⁸New York Times, October 24, 1903, p. 2.

⁴⁹Ibid., October 27, 1903, p. 6, November 4, 1903, p. 1. McClellan's plurality was 61,000. Tammany gained control over the Boards of Estimate and Aldermen. Grout polled 66,000 votes and Fornes 62,100; Kurland, "Seth Low," p. 250.

Problems in New York reached a climax when in 1904 some of the most scandalous exposures took place in business and government. These had to do with charges of gouging levelled at utility and insurance companies. Tammany found itself in a position where it had to fight the rising tide of progressivism which had taken hold in the metropolis. Cockran's role had been cut out for him. He had to draw a compromise between his conservative principles and a pragmatic program for Tammany to present to the ever increasing demands of the electorate for reform.

New Yorkers such as the City Club members and the Merchants Association, long concerned about exorbitant gas and electricity rates, clamoured for an investigation of public utility companies.⁵⁰ The city government, too, as the previous election debates would indicate, had been victimized by over-charging. For years huge combines had reaped the monopoly benefits of preferred status in each of the city's boroughs.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Merlo J. Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes, (2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), I, 132.

⁵¹ Wesser, Hughes, pp. 21-22. Manhattan Gas and Electric Company merged in 1884 with Consolidated Gas Co. Specific legal prohibitions enacted earlier by the New York Legislature against combinations had been ignored. By 1900 Consolidated Gas had expanded so that no competition against them existed. In 1897 the Greater New York Charter required public bidding on City lighting contracts to be fulfilled each year. One set of rates would be announced when contracts came up for renewal. The Low Administration found in 1903 that New York's rates were higher than anywhere else.

In October 1904, John T. Oakley, Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity agreed with Consolidated Gas officials to build a plant in Astoria, Long Island. A wave of protest swept the press threatening Mayor McClellan's administration with considerable embarrassment, McClellan rejected Oakley's decision and instead announced plans to construct a municipal lighting plant that would supply the city's needs. By 1905, however, nothing had been accomplished.

Albany responded to the public demand for an investigation and in the Spring set up a committee chaired by State Senator Frederick C. Stevens and with the responsibility of interrogations to Charles Evans Hughes a prominent lawyer. Hughes examined politicians and executives of all the gas and electric companies operating in the five boroughs. He discovered that the corporations had been charging the City rates three times as much for the same amount of service given to private businesses.⁵³

This investigation had considerable effect not only on the city but also in the State of New York. William Randolph Hearst,

⁵²Wesser, Hughes, pp. 22-23; Syrett, Gentelman, pp. 211-213. The Remson bill would have permitted this, but it was defeated.

⁵³Pusey, Hughes, I, 132, 138. The chief target of the investigation was the New York Gas and Electric Light and Power Co. The hearings opened on March 30, 1905. Later Hughes recommended seventy-five cents gas instead of the one dollar which the companies had been charging; New York Times, February 21, 1905, p. 1. Tammany supported seventy-five cents gas. Murphy and McClellan recommended an investigation; Wesser, Hughes, pp. 29-32.

long an advocate of municipal ownership and an enemy of Tammany Hall, decided to run as an independent against McClellan for mayor. At first he had approached Murphy but the boss turned him down. Hearst subsequently organized his own party, the Municipal Ownership League and pledged himself to city proprietorship of the major utilities in New York. Because the State legislature had failed to pass a gas rate bill and to make provision for automatic reversion to the public of the new, privately built subway lines, Hearst had succeeded in attracting to his camp social progressives, single taxers and right-wing socialists.⁵⁴ The Municipal Ownership League turned the campaign of 1905 into the most hard fought political battle in many years. They had attacked McClellan and Murphy mercilessly.⁵⁵ Hoping to capture the independent vote usually attracted by reformers, and the Tammany working class voters as well, Hearst newspapers labeled McClellan the "Gas Man" and linked him with the gas interests. Murphy was depicted as a criminal in prison garb.⁵⁶

Cockran, who had been in Washington and in the Philippines, did not participate until his return from the Far East in October. When asked by reporters in San Francisco what he thought of the Hearst

⁵⁴Yellowitz, Labor, pp. 190-191.

⁵⁵Wesser, Hughes, p. 78.

⁵⁶Yellowitz, Labor, pp. 192-193.

candidacy, he answered that he "must have been put up by the bolters from the Democratic party." He then dismissed the subject laughing, thinking it very amusing.⁵⁷ Tammany, notwithstanding this bravado, could not ignore Hearst's growing strength. They decided upon a frontal attack by dubbing him either socialist or anarchist, depending on the situation at the moment.⁵⁸ Cockran took issue with Hearst's form of journalism. He accused the publisher of appealing to every base appetite. Cockran declared that this form of communication symbolized the anarchy which had befallen the New York community. He tried to convince the New York voter that Hearst's victory would give socialism a breeding ground, thus undermining democratic institutions, and endangering freedom of business enterprise as well as individual liberty.

Cockran analyzed Hearst's proposals for public ownership in a more logical vein. As he had in 1897 and 1899, Cockran denied that government could operate utilities more efficiently than private business. He argued that relative productivity of labor makes the difference between the high and low costs of production. Never is private business run as poorly as government, Cockran contended. The latter cannot compete for the higher quality of personnel private

⁵⁷ The Bulletin (San Francisco), October 17, 1905, Cockran MSS.

⁵⁸ Syrett, Gentleman, p. 226. McClellan said that Hearst received support from white collar workers, clerks, and small shop keepers. He also had the Catholic intelligentsia.

enterprise can afford. Operating with less talented and unskilled labor, public enterprise would entail higher costs and the citizens would ultimately suffer.⁵⁹

Despite the overwhelming resources at Hearst's disposal, he lost the election. He had to contend with a newly organized Tammany led by a formidable opponent in Murphy, and buttressed by the powerful oratory of Cockran and the other eloquent Tammany speakers. The Wigwam also did not hesitate to use extra-legal methods to win, as a later court inquiry brought out. Hearst, nevertheless, proved himself to be a strong opponent, having garnered 224,925 votes to McClellan's 228,397. Had it not been for a large number of lost ballot boxes and the imported voters, Hearst might very well have become the mayor of New York City.⁶⁰

Cockran's political career reached new heights in 1906. Not only did he receive the great Tammany honor of being installed as Grand Sachem, but he became also the chairman of the Platform

⁵⁹ Cockran, Speech During the Mayoralty Campaign of George McClellan and William Randolph Hearst, Delivered Before the Irish Municipal League, Carnegie Hall, November 4, 1905, Cockran MSS. Cockran said that government ownership of telephones, for instance, would tax all the people, even those who neither owned nor used any.

⁶⁰ W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 237; Yellowitz, Labor, p. 197; Wesser, Hughes, p. 78. Hearst contested the election in court. From the testimony, it appears that the ballot boxes had been tampered with. Some had been dumped into the river. A large number of floaters and imported men had voted the Tammany ticket.

Committee. In that capacity, he wrote the party's resolutions which would be the foundation of the platform adopted at Buffalo for the 1906 gubernatorial campaign.⁶¹

At the general committee meeting in March 1906, Cockran offered several resolutions which covered national, State and local questions. They declared the party to be against municipal operation of public utilities, although they stressed the need for government control of public service corporations. Cockran denounced socialism as a "sinister consequence of corruption and graft which degrades our political and industrial life."⁶² Citing a broad range of society's ills, he attacked favoritism either by government departments or the courts. In particular he singled out for criticism trusts, high protective tariffs, excessive rates charged by public franchises, and corruption on the part of both political officials and managers of industrial corporation. Advocating regulatory commissions as guardians against business abuses, Cockran declared that "the operations of

⁶¹ New York Times, March 5, 1906, p. 5; The New York Herald, March 19, 1906, Cockran MSS.

⁶² New York Times, March 20, 1906, pp. 1-2; Cockran, Address on Senator Grady's Public Utilities Bill, delivered in the Senate Chamber, Albany, New York, February 13, 1906, Cockran MSS. Cockran testified before the committee. He favored a commission in New York State similar to that set up by the Hepburn Act. He believed that the New York Commission should recommend "reasonable rates" allowing companies "reasonable" profits; "Galley One-Platform," March 19, 1906 for Democratic Republicans Assembled in Committee in Tammany Hall, Ibid.

banks, trust companies and public service corporations should be placed under close and constant scrutiny of vigilant public officers, and laws demanding stricter responsibility.⁶³

Whether public utilities were administered by government or by private business, Cockran's resolutions advocated that every person who used their services should pay the appropriate share of the costs. No one should be compelled by taxation or otherwise to bear any part of his neighbor's expenses for light, power, telephone or transportation. The duty of government, he said, is to ascertain the actual cost of operating all public service corporations and to fix periodically reasonable rates for that service. The community must always be admitted to a share in all benefits flowing from the cost savings and improvements in their administration.⁶⁴

Cockran referred to the insurance scandals as the "gross and sordid corruption" which has governed the Republican administration for a long period, and as a "scandal of unparalleled dimensions." He objected to the lack of prosecution of the real culprits.⁶⁵ The resolutions demanded the passage of legislation that would deal effectively with the whole subject of life insurance. To prevent political commit-

⁶³ "Galley One Platform," March 19, 1906, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁴ "Galley Two Platform," Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Cockran denounced the Republicans for neglecting to investigate the evils in the Insurance and Banking Departments in New York State.

ments with corporations, Cockran called for a corrupt practices law which would require candidates to make public their election expenses.⁶⁶

Cockran questioned the New York State legislature's sincerity in its creation of the new public utilities boards. (The Board of Railroad Commissioners, the Commission of Gas and Electricity and the Rapid Transit Board of New York City.) The legislature had deceived the public by only pretending to accede to its demands. The Democrats in the name of the people had called for a permanent commission which would oversee public service corporations and from "time to time ascertain reasonable rates for the service they perform. . . ." The exclusion of telephone companies from these boards reflected the Albany politicians' disinterest in the community. Denial of labor's right to be represented on the boards provided another example of lack of concern, he said. In place of the existing system, Cockran offered suggestions for new legislation. New laws should spell out specifically the function of the relationship between the community and the boards; their powers, their membership; how they might operate more efficiently,

⁶⁶New York Herald, March 20, 1906, Cockran MSS. Cockran criticized William Jerome, the symbol of good government in New York City for failing to prosecute the criminals in the insurance scandals. Cockran said that the only ones whom the District Attorney investigated were those who came forward and confessed. He made no effort to seek out the individuals who stayed under cover.

and finally the handling of litigation.⁶⁷ Cockran's resolutions also attacked Hearst's municipal ownership proposals. On this point the press made Cockran appear to be a conservative Republican. The New York Herald wrote that Cockran had surprised the Tammany General Committee because it had been rumored that Charles Murphy was inclined to "look with favor" on plans to support Hearst for the governorship in the fall. The New York Daily Tribune maintained that Cockran had proposed a Republican rather than a Democratic platform. They

⁶⁷"Platform of the Democracy of the City and County of New York, Tammany Hall, 1906," Cockran MSS. The recommendations more specifically were: First-the community, capital and labour should be represented on every public franchise, wherever operation was entrusted to a private agency. Second-the relationship between the enterprises and the communities they were chartered to serve should be precisely defined. Third-the actual control of the corporation should be entrusted and operated by the stock holders to encourage investment. Every corporation engaged in Interstate Commerce should include the President of the United States on its Board of Directors, on a State level the Governor, and so on down the line. The chief executives should be constantly informed through their officers of everything concerning the management of the corporations. Full publicity should be provided for every contract the companies entered into. Fourth,-litigation should include time limits on hearings and an increase in the number of Appellate Divisions of the State courts, to expedite hearings and decisions. Disposals of cases should take place in rapid time; In "Galley Two," he advocated an eight hour law with prevailing wage rates; and all existing labor statutes should be enforced; 'increase in construction of rural highways throughout the state, a conservation law to protect land and parks. For the City he proposed a three platoon system for the police with an eight hour day; tenure for teachers and an increase in salaries as well as a pension system; From the Federal Government he asked for direct election of Senators, enactment of stronger anti-trust laws and a speedy cessation of Russian persecution of the Jews in "Galley Three," Cockran MSS.

wrote:

The versatile Mr. Bourke Cockran . . . attempt to maneuver the Democracy into the place of the Republican party as the defender of conservative principles recalls the equally futile attempt of a few Democrats on the eve of . . . 1896. . . . The sorrows of a few Democrats over the state of their party to the contrary notwithstanding, the Democracy is and must be the party of radicalism. Its natural adherents are the radicals, though the dead traditionalism of a Parker or the corporate interests of a Murphy . . . manage to control the organization from time to time. On the other hand, the rank and file of the Republican party, while progressive and intent on correcting abuses which grow up, such as those of the insurance companies in the state or of rate discrimination in the nation, are the natural guardians of property rights and established order.

Cockran, they said, had been faced with the difficult task of providing a patchwork of principles for Murphy to run against Hearst whom the Tammany boss had wished to force into a vulnerable position in the coming campaign. Cockran, reasoned the Tribune reporter, merely had made himself Murphy's "trumpet." Tammany, the newspaper pointed out, had to link its fortunes with conservatism in order to win. Principles had nothing to do with the issue.⁶⁹

Tammany had to face a formidable contender the next fall in Republican nominee for Governor Charles Evans Hughes. Fortified with the backing of President Theodore Roosevelt and Elihu Root, Hughes had to be matched with an equally strong candidate. Many of Hughes' recommendations after the scandals investigations had been adopted by

⁶⁸ New York Herald, March 20, 1906, 112, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁹ New York Daily Tribune, March 21, 1906, ibid., MSS.

the State legislature. In order to weaken Hughes' popularity, Cockran attacked the reforms with which he had been most associated. The tightening of regulations over lobbies, voting procedures and stock transactions, and the establishment of an insurance commission as well as the Boards of Public Utilities, could be traced back to Hughes' recommendations.⁷⁰

In early summer, Tammany finally decided upon the Democratic candidate. Murphy and McClellan had become enemies.⁷¹ With the Mayor out of the running, the Tammany boss had to turn to Hearst, an overwhelmingly popular crusader for reform. The Independent Municipal League had endorsed him and much of upstate support was coming the publisher's way. Murphy, fearful of a Hearst victory and its implications in regard to power in New York Democratic party politics, decided to join with upstate politicians to back the publisher for the

⁷⁰Pusey, Hughes, I, 166-167, 178-179. Later Root came to New York and campaigned for Hughes.

⁷¹Syrett, Gentleman, pp. 230-231. McClellan said that he and Murphy could not get along because they disagreed about who should hold offices in the McClellan administration. McClellan considered himself an organization man, willing to recognize Murphy as head, in New York County. He claimed to have accepted Murphy's recommendation so long as they met with his own standards; New York Times, July 5, 1906, p. 3. During the July 4th celebrations (in the three hours of speeches), McClellan's name had not been mentioned by any of the Tammany orators. Cockran had presided and delivered an attack against Jerome.

Albany position.⁷²

In September, the Democrats held their convention at Buffalo. Cockran, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, had worked out the platform based on his March resolutions. Although utterly opposed to Hearst, Cockran voted for him. Later, Cockran told reporters that he had done so because as a Democrat he could not help it.⁷³ He explained that no delegates came pledged to any candidate but all unanimously endorsed the party platform. After the planks were read to Hearst on the telephone and he approved them, Cockran then cast his lot with the publisher. Hearst was nominated by 309 votes, although only 226 were required for the nomination.⁷⁴

Cockran swallowed his pride and half-heartedly campaigned for the Democratic candidate. He had to explain publicly why he had changed his mind, when he had so adamantly opposed him in

⁷²Swanberg, Hearst, p. 241. Upstate Conservative Democrats shied away from municipal ownership tags. They influenced the change of title from Municipal League to Independence League; Pusey, Hughes, I, 174; Yellowitz, Labor, p. 205; New York Times, June 6, 1906, p. 1. The Democratic Club now called itself the National Democratic Club.

⁷³New York Times, September 24, 1906, p. 1, September 27, 1906, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁴Cockran, "Affadavit of Charles F. Murphy Relative to the Nomination of William R. Hearst as the Candidate of the Independence League and the Democratic Party for Governor of New York," October, 1906, in Cockran MSS. The votes of the Tammany delegation gave the nomination to Hearst; Cockran, Speech Delivered During the Campaign of William R. Hearst for the Governorship of New York, 1906, Ibid., It had become apparent two days earlier that Hearst was the only serious candidate.

the past. He rationalized that he had misunderstood Hearst's recommendations for municipal ownership of public service corporations, and had accused him of socialistic leanings because Cockran thought the publisher had favored reduced rates regardless of cost. Upon closer analysis, Cockran continued, he realized that the Democratic candidate Hearst had actually advocated that these corporations be operated on a self-sustaining basis. Internal efficiencies would permit lower costs of operation and the saving could be passed on through lower rates to consumers.⁷⁵

Concentrating more comfortably on the role of the Democratic party, Cockran contended that citizens should choose their candidates on the basis of platform. To vote for a Republican would retain the corrupt alliance between business and government. He said that the power to enjoy rights depends in large part on those forces outside of the operations and control of government. Theoretically, everyone has freedom of mobility but in practice one's ability to move from his doorstep depended on private executive decisions regarding the administration and operation of public transportation facilities.⁷⁶ Against such enormous power no one's freedom could be guaranteed. Who these

⁷⁵ Cockran, Speech During Gubernatorial Campaign, 1906, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁶ Ibid.; New York Herald, March 20, 1906, Ibid. In the original resolutions Cockran had proposed transportation mergers and a scheme for universal transfers on all the city's transit lines; New York Times, October 4, 1906, pp. 1-2. In a letter to the Independence League, Hearst said that if elected he would remove the present Railroad Commission.

ruling individuals are or how they exercise their authority, Cockran contended, no one knows. In addition to transportation they set policy over communications such as telephone and telegraph lines; the cost of food, light and every other necessity of life.⁷⁷

Despite the deal made by the Democrats, William Randolph Hearst lost to the more reserved, progressive and popular Charles Evans Hughes. The small margin of Hearst's 691,055 as against 749,028 for Hughes precludes any general interpretation of the results.⁷⁸ Notwithstanding this fact, William S. Bennet, says in his "Reminiscences" that even though Hearst had commanded a large vote Tammany had defeated itself. Hearst's Independence League that year had grown weak and inefficient. Tammany took the occasion to raid and hold the districts of the League by force and nominate Tammany candidates for the Assembly. The Hearst papers "had to make a holler," says Bennet, but they could do nothing.⁷⁹ Prendergast relates in his "Reminiscences" that Hearst had lost many votes of the

⁷⁷Cockran, Speech During Gubernatorial Campaign, 1906, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁸New York Times, December 12, 1906, p. 4, December 13, 1906, p. 8. (editorial)

⁷⁹"Reminiscences of William S. Bennett." (2 vols, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1949-1950), I, 86, 95. Bennett was a Republican and a member of the New York State Assembly between 1901 and 1902, a justice of the New York Municipal Court and a member of Congress between 1905 and 1911.

independent Democrats because of his campaign tactics.⁸⁰ Although Hearst had accepted Tammany's endorsement, he either ignored or ridiculed the platform. Despite Cockran's public rationalizations, Hearst sustained his advocacy of municipal ownership. He also attacked the Hall and Murphy relentlessly.⁸¹

The results also indicate that people had voted for the individuals rather than the party. Hughes ran well ahead of the other regular in his organization, and his own ticket met with defeat. Hearst, on the other hand, ran behind his fellow candidates and his running mate Lewis S. Chanler. Hughes had cut heavily into the Democratic New York City districts even though he had lost the City by 70,000 votes. Wesser suggests that the Republican managers accomplished their objective of appealing to the Independents aroused by the 1905 gas and insurance scandals.⁸² Al Smith in his autobiography, wrote that the defeat of the eighty cents gas bill and the

⁸⁰"Reminiscences of William A. Prendergast," (6 vols. Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1948-1951), II, 235, Prendergast was Comptroller of New York City between 1910 and 1917 and chairman of the Public Service Commission in New York State between 1921 and 1930. He became associated with Cockran through Theodore Roosevelt during the days of the progressive movement in New York State.

⁸¹Ibid., 234; New York Times, September 27, 1906, pp. 1-2; October 4, 1906, pp. 1-2; Pusey, Hughes, I, 174; Wesser, Hughes, pp. 85-86; Swanbeg, Hearst, p. 245.

⁸²Wesser, Hughes, pp. 98-100. Hughes emphasized moderation in his campaign with the promise to introduce legislation geared to business and government reform.

insurance scandals created such public reaction against the Republican party that Hughes was the only one elected on his ticket. Hughes' personal integrity brought about his own victory. All of the State officers other than governor had been captured by the Democrats. The legislature, however, remained in Republican control.⁸³

Cockran must have secretly celebrated Hearst's defeat. His disagreement with the party's choice, however, did not affect his relationship with Murphy until some time later. He had done his job and campaigned. His role of publicity man for Tammany continued. In 1907, he presented his 1906 resolutions in the mayoralty election. Critics accused him of fence straddling. In a letter to Frank H. Mott, Attorney General of New York State, Cockran explained that when discussing trusts one must distinguish clearly between those companies operating public franchises and those engaged in manufacturing. He did not think that he had equivocated when carefully pointing out the differences. He insisted, as he had all along, that the New York Democracy sought "a method by which government supervision of public service corporations be made effective, continuous and orderly."⁸⁴

⁸³ Alfred E. Smith, Up to Now: Autobiography (New York: The Viking Press, 1929), p. 80; Roscoe C. E. Brown in Ray B. Smith, ed. History of the State of New York: Political and Governmental (6 vols. Syracuse: The Syracuse Press, Inc., 1922), IV, 134.

⁸⁴ Cockran to Frank H. Mott, Attorney General's Office (Albany), July 27, 1907, Letterbook #13, p. 464, Cockran MSS. Cockran was referring to an editorial in the New York World of May 27, 1907. Cockran to Editor of the World, May 27, 1907, Ibid., July 18, 1907, Letterbook #13, pp. 452-453, Ibid.

Shortly after Hughes had taken office, the State legislature attempted to introduce a bill which would fix fares on railroads at a uniform two cents a mile. Hughes vetoed that because he feared the smaller State roads could not give adequate service at the price set by statute. Instead, he recommended the creation of a Public Service Commission with the power to fix standard rates of payment by the users of public utilities. His recommendation was put into law on July 1, 1907 and supported by both parties.⁸⁵

Cockran criticized the admirers of Hughes for exaggerating his accomplishments. While Cockran favored the Hughes policy with regard to exposures of corruption and dishonesty, he denied that the newly appointed commissioners had done anything significant in improving service or reducing utility rates.⁸⁶

Despite his apparent devotion to Murphy and his efforts to articulate a progressive Tammany policy regarding State legislation Cockran ceased to be the chief spokesman of the Tammany boss. Newspapers had signified difficulties between the two men as early as the fall of 1907 when the New York Sun reported that Daniel F.

⁸⁵ Smith, Up to Now, p. 81.

⁸⁶ Cockran Resolutions Adopted at the Ratification Meeting at Tammany Hall, October 23, 1907, Cockran MSS.

Cohalan had become "the mouthpieces of the Tammany organization."⁸⁷ In March 1908, Murphy told reporters that he had dropped Cockran because "Tammany is a Democratic organization and puts none but Democrats on its committees."⁸⁸ Cockran's office issued a rejoinder which declared that everybody knew he had written all the definitions of the Democracy accepted and approved by Murphy during the past four years. Cockran asked which of them did the boss repudiate and on what grounds. He said, "Surely he cannot wish us to infer that he is incapable as his critics assert of understanding the significance of expressions which he has applauded publicly?"⁸⁹

In fact the controversy centered on the question of the receivership of the Knickerbocker Bank. The New York American reported that a friend of Cockran's, "well qualified to talk for him," told the "inside story of the Murphy-Cockran row." The friend upheld the story that the dispute involved the Knickerbocker Trust Company. The financial institution had been one of the first to fail in the 1907 panic. Cockran supposedly had used his influence in having his father-in-law

⁸⁷ Globe (New York) March 16, 1908, Cockran MSS. The paper had reported that Cohalan had taken over all of Cockran's positions. Cohalan was Murphy's son-in-law; the New York Times, March 16, 1908, p. 1. Cockran had been Chairman of Committee on Speakers, Committee on Legislation and the Law Committee.

⁸⁸ Evening Sun (New York) March 16, 1908, Cockran MSS.

⁸⁹ New York American, March 17, 1908, Ibid.

General Henry Clay Ide, named as one of the receivers. According to the report Cockran had contacted Attorney-General William S. Jackson and told him that none but individuals of the highest character should be appointed in order to insure public confidence. Cockran suggested that no one identified with Wall Street should be appointed and apparently Jackson concurred. Earlier, however, Murphy had told Cockran that his own choice would be John Quinn, counsel for the National Bank of North America and that "it was all fixed." Obviously, Cockran interfered with Murphy's plans and disregarded the boss' wishes because he thought Quinn's appointment would be scandalous. When Murphy discovered Cockran had the meeting with Jackson, he asked Cockran to see him. The Tammany leader angrily told Cockran that he had no right to interfere and that he, Murphy, would select the receiver. Attorney-General Jackson had actually appointed Ide, but allegedly Cockran had insisted that his own law firm should be made counsel. After their argument, Murphy and Cockran stopped talking to each other.⁹⁰ Murphy denied that the bank controversy caused his rift with Cockran.⁹¹ When asked about being dropped from the committees of Tammany Cockran said that he had been on so many that he could not keep touch. He had not been consulted about his appointments to them in the first place. He had

⁹⁰ New York Times, March 14, 1908, p. 1; New York American, March 18, 1908, Cockran MSS. Cockran's father-in-law was actually appointed without Cockran's knowledge. Quinn and Daniel F. Cohalan were friends.

⁹¹ Evening Sun (New York) March 16, 1908, Cockran MSS.

served on the Executive Committee so that he could "consult with the leaders on public matters," and attended meetings only when platforms had to be drafted. He maintained that he had no interest in routine politics.⁹²

The Philadelphia Record expressed the sentiments of many of the newspapers about dismissal of Cockran, criticizing it as "stupid malignity" to deprive this distinguished Democrat of his seat." They suggested that Cockran's Democratic constituency "do itself honor" and at the same time rebuke stupidity by returning him to the House of Representatives.⁹³

The ousting of Cockran might have reflected more than a personal quarrel, and may have revealed an overall Tammany policy. Joseph Hutmaker in his article "Charles Evans Hughes and Charles Francis Murphy; The Metamorphoses of Progressivism," contends that Murphy had decided to rid the Hall of the old guard and to pledge himself to work for social and economic reform. During the first years of Murphy's leadership the Hall's behavior varied little from the patterns established by Croker and earlier bosses, writes the author. During the Hughes Administration a new group of somewhat "deviationist view toward machine politics" contested with the conservative

⁹²New York American, March 18, 1908, Ibid.

⁹³Philadelphia Record, January 16, [1908?] , p. 20, Ibid.

advisers for Murphy's interest. Among them were Robert F. Wagner, Alfred E. Smith and James Walker. They had argued that the party must respond to the social and economic needs of the masses. Murphy, a practical politician, responded positively. He reasoned that in order for his party to retain power it must move with the times. The most important laws emerging from New York State's legislature had come after Hughes left office, and emanated from young Tammany lawmakers.⁹⁴

It is difficult to say whether Huthmacker's analysis applies to Cockran because by this time he had moved closer toward becoming a progressive. A review of his political statements and activities during the years preceding his departure from Tammy reveals an increasing tendency towards the support of government regulation of business and political abuses. At the same time, however, he demonstrated an unswerving abhorrence of socialism, in particular, government ownership of public utilities.

For example, Bourke Cockran appeared before the United States Supreme Court, arguing in favor of the New York State "80 cents gas rate bill." He told the Court that he had come as a citizen of the New York community "who pays gas bills and owns 1,200 shares of Citizens' Union Gas Company stock." He had associated himself with the counsel for the people of New York. Cockran eloquently

⁹⁴J. Joseph Huthmacher, "Charles Evans Hughes and Charles Francis Murphy: the Metamorphoses of Progressivism," New York History, XLVI (January 1965), pp. 28-29.

argued in favor of the constitutionality of the State law, which the Circuit Court had denied. His brief contended that the Circuit Court had erred when it held that no price for gas could be constitutional which did not allow the company to earn six percent on its investments. He reminded the justices that it must accept the legislature's decision of 80 cents as adequate. It allowed the companies their fair and reasonable profit. If the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower court, he stated it would imply that all other actions of the State legislature should be considered equally as questionable; that the law makers were not capable of carrying out their responsibilities to the electorate. For Cockran this meant a denial of the basic tenets of democracy and the right of the people of New York to determine their own destiny.⁹⁵

The activities of Cockran in Congress reveal more adequately his views of the function of the legislature in the changing twentieth century America. A study of his Congressional contributions also indicates that he had gradually become a progressive. By 1908 he had

⁹⁵ _____. Washington, November 4, (5) 1908, Cockran MSS. (newspaper clipping); New York Times, January 12, 1909, pp. 1-2, January 14, 1909, p. 1. The newspaper reported that the court ruled that the "80 cents rate bill" must be enforced until it is shown that it is confiscatory. The companies had the responsibility to prove that such a condition exists; Cockran to General James Jourdan, New York, January 19, 1909, ~~The~~ Cockran told him that the controversy had ended and the companies were ready to furnish their product at the legal rate of 80 cents. Jourdan was president of the Brooklyn Union Company. The law had originally been passed by the New York State legislature in 1906 and had stipulated that gas be charged at 80 cents per thousand cubic feet.

developed a close friendship also with Theodore Roosevelt, whom he had severly criticized in the 1904 presidential campaign.

CHAPTER VII

CONGRESSMAN COCKRAN AND NATIONAL ISSUES: 1904-1908

William Bourke Cockran returned to Congress in 1904. When he left the Democratic party nine years before he thought that he could "render better service to the great cause of democracy outside than inside . . . official life."¹ Since the time he left Congress in 1895 the American economy had moved from a severe depression to prosperity with its relative position in the world economy also greatly improved. With the increased rate of growth trusts became more numerous and powerful in transportation, manufacturing and banking. Many Americans were frightened by the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few business tycoons.² Concurrent with the rapid changes in the material and social mixture of American life came the dissatisfaction with nineteenth century liberalism and the inequalities which it had justified. Americans began to reject the idea that one's destiny was predetermined. Equality before

¹ Cockran, Speech Accepting the Nomination to Congress, 1903, Cockran MSS; Certificate of Election, February 23, 1904, *Ibid*.

² George Edwin Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper Brothers, 1958), pp. 2-9.

the law proved inadequate. The new ideologies demanded that social, religious and racial differences be eradicated. With conscious, cooperative action, man could move his own destiny in desired directions. They believed that through the power of government, reform could be realized.³

Cockran also believed in the need of governmental reform and regulation in order to thwart the spread of unbridled private business power and the encroachment of socialism on American life. He hoped that as an individual he could provide an important service against threats to democracy through the existing political structure.⁴ When he finally decided to accept the Tammany nomination in December, 1903 to fill the Congressional seat vacated by George McClellan, Cockran called for political leadership to curtail the influence of monopolies and he blamed a demoralized America on the alliance between the Republicans and the large corporations. By catering to big business lobbies the Republicans had betrayed the people and created an atmosphere of distrust both at home and abroad.⁵

Cockran's acceptance of the nomination brought many welcome

³ Charles Forcey, The Crossroads of Liberalism: Croly, Weyl, Lippmann and the Progressive Era, 1900-1925 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. IX-X.

⁴ Cockran, Speech Accepting the Congressional Nomination, 1903, Cockran MSS.

⁵ Ibid.

responses. Goldwin Smith, for example, thought that Cockran would be a potent voice in the House of Representatives against the protective tariff which favored Britain against Canada.⁶ Edward M. Shepard, the defeated 1901 Democratic candidate for mayor, expressed optimism when he said, "I take it as a harbinger of a better administration of the Democratic party." It appeared to Shepard that the future of the party required ability of the highest type in the national legislature and Cockran represented that.⁷

By mid-January, much to Cockran's annoyance, Republican Governor Benjamin B. Odell had not yet called the special election to fill McClellan's vacated seat of the twelfth Congressional district. The New York Times claimed that President Roosevelt and the Republican managers wished to delay it in order to keep Cockran out of the House while the members debated the Panama question. Charles Murphy had decided to "shape-up" Congress by replacing the below-par New York delegation with men of high calibre. Cockran was his first choice and the Republicans knew this, reported the newspaper.⁸ By the last week in January the Governor set February 23, 1904 as the date. As an unopposed candidate, Cockran won the election to his seat in the House of Representatives.⁹

⁶ Goldwin Smith to Cockran, December 29, 1903, Cockran MSS.

⁷ Edward Shepard to Cockran, December 30, 1903, Ibid.

⁸ New York Times, January 17, 1904, p. 7, February 15, 1904, p.6.

⁹ Cockran to Michael J. Larken, January 22, 1904, Letterbook #9,

Shortly before Cockran took his seat, the New York delegation in the House proposed him as their candidate for the Ways and Means Committee to John Sharp Williams, the House Minority leader. Bryanites objected immediately because of an interview Cockran had with the New York World reporter, James Creelman. Cockran, Creelman reported, told him that despite the possibility of a bad government under McKinley, the Democrats who voted for Bryan in 1896 did so rather than risk anarchy or no government under the Nebraskan. Disturbed by this disclosure, Williams delayed action on the New York delegation's recommendations and asked Cockran for an explanation. Williams as the leader of Democrats in the House, would not reward the New York Congressman with that very important committee position if he had actually denounced "the six million people, who voted the Democratic ticket in 1900" as anarchists. Williams declared that it would be an insult to the Democrats of the country and a betrayal of the loyal members of the party to reward anyone for virtually slapping them in the face.¹⁰

p. 430, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Rev. J. F. O'Connor, S. J., January 25, 1904, p. 453, Ibid.; New York Times, February 24, 1904, p. 1; Certificate of Election, February 23, 1904, Cockran MSS.

¹⁰John Sharp Williams to Cockran, March 2, 1904, Cockran MSS. Williams represented Mississippi and was a Bryan supporter.

Cockran answered the Mississippian three days later. He explained that Mr. Creelman reproduced the interview from memory, three of four days after it had occurred. The reporter had "undoubtedly" quoted his, Cockran's, words but with omissions. Creelman and the New York Congressman had discussed why the latter supported McKinley, and what the orator had said in 1896 in his Madison Square Garden speech. Cockran reminded Williams that he had never justified bolting the party on a purely economic question. A patriotic citizen, he contended, had to act upon principles. Cockran maintained that one could not conclude that he accused Bryan of anarchy and lack of patriotism because he said the effects of his policy would be subversive. He did not believe that Bryan and his followers willingly proposed to subvert the government.¹¹

Apparently Cockran's letter convinced Williams. On March 10, 1904 the Tammany "orator" became a member of the House Ways and Means Committee.¹² One month later, on April 9, 1904, he made his maiden speech on a favorite subject, the usurpation of power. In an eloquent plea for the integrity of the House of Representatives he assailed the executive branch for attempting to interfere with the legislature. The Secretary of the Interior had issued an order allowing all

¹¹Cockran to Williams, March 5, 1904, Cockran MSS.

¹²United States Congress, Congressional Record, 58th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 3095 %; Williams to Cockran, March 7, 1904, Cockran MSS.

persons who had served in the army and navy of the United States during the Civil War, and who had reached the age of 62, to receive a pension under the June 27, 1890 Pension Law. Cockran proposed a resolution that the House Judiciary Committee be instructed to inquire into the authority of the Secretary's order. If no such power could be substantiated the committee should be instructed to indicate whether the executive department had acted unconstitutionally. Cockrain maintained that his purpose in proposing the resolution was to protect the balance of power in the national government. He did not intend to question the policy of paying liberal pensions to veterans but proposed that they be determined by the Congress and not by any "self-constituted" authority. Over the years, he complained, the House had steadily declined in its prestige, which resulted from concessions to the other branches by disloyal members. At the expense of the legislature, the executive and judicial departments had steadily augmented their spheres.¹³

Realizing the extreme delicacy of making this request on the eve of the Presidential election and when the majority in the House and the Administration were of the same political party, Cockran agreed to postpone definite action on his resolution until after the election. Meanwhile, he recommended setting up a committee to consider more

¹³Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 4575-4578.

fully how far the privileges of the House had been invaded.¹⁴ The New York Times reported that both Democrats and Republicans received Cockran's speech with great enthusiasm. In the ensuing vote on the resolution only one hundred three Republicans, of the two hundred ten, supported the President, "who came within three votes of having to undergo what would have been virtually the censure of the House."¹⁵

About a fortnight after his dramatic reappearance in the House Cockran had a confrontation with John Dalzell, Republican from Pennsylvania. The chamber had been debating a ship subsidy bill which would create a commission to consider recommendations from the President for the development of an American merchant marine.¹⁶ Previous attempts to pass such a measure had met with defeat.¹⁷ Cockran objected to the bill because he thought it to be one more attempt of protectionists to have their way in granting special privileges

¹⁴Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 4581. The Secretary of Interior claimed precedent for this under the Cleveland Administration. Cockran maintained that when Cleveland issued an executive order to have money taken from the treasury he had acted unconstitutionally. It did not matter that he was a Democrat, the precedent constituted an illegal act.

¹⁵New York Times, April 13, 1904, Cockran MSS.

¹⁶Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 5455. Dalzell was not only a fellow member of the Ways and Means Committee but he was a close associate of Speaker Cannon. The bill's number was H.R. 7056.

¹⁷Dorothy Ganfield Fowler, John Coit Spooner (New York: University Publishers, 1961), p. 330. Roosevelt had also made this recommendation in his first message to Congress.

to a small number of citizens. He said that it was actually a "scheme to induce certain reluctant members of the majority to take the very short step from indirect to direct use of the public funds for the benefit of private citizens." To Cockran it was protection in its "full fruit."¹⁸ The only excuse he could see for a subsidy had to be that those engaged in the carrier business could not do it at a profit. The same rationalization had been used to promote tariffs. The measure, he maintained was another Republican attempt to promote the influence of trusts. Once again he found an opportunity to express his disapproval of monopolies. He discredited the notion that one could make a distinction between good trusts and bad. The Democrats, he pointed out, believed no trust could prosper unless it enjoyed special favors of government. The tariff as well as ship subsidy guaranteed profit for their inefficiencies. Democrats on the other hand wished to promote economic growth through competition.¹⁹

At this point in his argument, John Dalzell interrupted Cockran and asked him if these were the same views he had entertained when making the Republican campaign speeches for McKinley in 1896.

¹⁸Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 5455.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 5459-5460; Daniel Lamont to Cockran, April 26, 1904, Cockran MSS. Lamont complained to Cockran that the Roosevelt Administration had acted prejudicially against the Northern Securities Trust when it prosecuted them as violators of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. He maintained that it was because the executives of this organization were Democrats. He also told Cockran that they had not sought

Cockran answered that he had never made a Republican speech or campaigned for any of that party's platform except on the question of currency. He had voted for McKinley, not the Republicans.²⁰

Dalzell accused Cockran of supporting the 1896 presidential candidate for profit, not principle. Incensed, Cockran retorted that he had never spoken or campaigned for money nor had he ever been paid for his speeches no matter what the occasion. He challenged the Pennsylvanian to show that the Republican national committee had even contributed as much as his railroad fare during all of that period. Cockran had paid for his own expenses wherever he went and on all occasions. Cockran asked members to show when in the previous twenty years he had received campaign funds.²¹ Upon Cockran's request for the name of Dalzell's informant, the Pennsylvania refused to divulge it.

Cockran, some days later, told a reporter of the Herald, his version of the 1896 campaign and denied engaging in the activities for profit. The paper published the interview in a conspicuous place

government favor, that they had built their own steamships, with American labor. They had not been among the subsidy seekers but on the contrary had opposed the bill.

²⁰Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 5460-5461.

²¹Ibid., pp. 5649-5652. Dalzell quoted from the Philadelphia Press that Cockran had recieved \$15,000 from the Palmer-Buckner campaign committee in 1896. Cockran called it a lie. He said that he had never had anything to do with that group.

on April 25. Dalzell refused to acknowledge the article but instead came to the House the next day fortified with books, papers and other materials ready to continue his accusation. This time he charged Cockran with political inconsistency. He claimed that the New Yorker had been a Greenbacker and a Gold Democrat; a Bryanite and an anti-Bryanite. Cockran accused Dalzell of confusing the facts and of reading garbled, disconnected or nonexistent interviews. He claimed never to have been a Greenbacker and as for political inconsistency, he said his behavior reflected devotion to principles. Once in his life, he declared, he had changed his allegiance and that was to avoid compromising his ideals. He reminded Dalzell that the Republicans had offered him a Congressional seat in 1896 but he had refused it.²² Before letting the matter drop however, Cockran proposed that a committee of five be appointed by the Speaker to inquire into Dalzell's charges. Cannon ruled it out of order because the events referred to occurred at a time when Cockran was not a member of the House.²³

In an editorial appearing in the Nogales Times Daily, George K. French, a Republican, praised Cockran for the manner in which he had defended himself against the "cowardly methods" used by Dalzell. He wrote "all the partisan sophistry that followers of politics know so

²²Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 5649-5655.

²³Ibid., p. 5655.

well how to use cannot sufficiently apologize for the unwarranted personal attack on Bourke Cockran." French did not think that Dalzell had displayed any integrity by making accusations which he could not substantiate. If he had a source, the editor claimed, the Representative had the duty to divulge it. Cockran emerged the victor.²⁴

With the approach of the Presidential election, Democrats engaged in discussions about whether Grover Cleveland would accept the nomination of their party. Cockran would have supported the former President but he did not believe Cleveland would run. Many party members wished to see him as the nominee because they believed him to be the one man who could break the Republican hold on the nation.²⁵ Cockran could not accept Bryan as an alternative to Cleveland. While the New York Congressman respected the Nebraskan's sincerity he questioned his judgement. In fact Bryan's personal virtues to Cockran meant danger. While one did not have to worry about the transparency of a corrupt politician's proposals, Cockran declared, the fanatic must always be avoided.²⁶

²⁴George K. French to Cockran, April 30, 1904, Nogales Daily Times, n.d., Cockran MSS.

²⁵Cockran to R. T. Spragins, March 10, 1904, Ibid.

²⁶Cockran to George L. Miller, January 19, 1904, Letterbook #9, p. 413, Ibid.

Charles Murphy of Tammany had hoped for a Cleveland boom in New York but David Hill, who had gained control of the Democrats wanted Alton Parker chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals. When the Cleveland draft failed to materialize Murphy proposed Mayor George McClellan. When he failed to receive endorsement for this candidate the Tammany boss wanted the State delegation to go uninstructed to the St. Louis Democratic National Convention. At the State convention in Albany on April 18, Brooklyn delegates, controlled by Boss Patrick McCarren, an enemy of Murphy, allied themselves with Hill. The delegates voted 301 to 140 to send a delegation instructed to support Parker at St. Louis. Tammany had also urged that a gold standard plank be included in the platform but instead the delegates excluded all reference to the currency question. Despite Murphy's refusal to yield from his minority position on instructions, Hill, in deference to Parker, agreed to Tammany going to the national convention fully represented and with credentials.²⁷

When the Democrats met at St. Louis on July 6, 1904 Cockran appeared among the New York delegates. The New York Times reported that he and Senator Thomas G. Grady employed every device to introduce a currency plank, but at every turn they met with defeat.²⁸

²⁷ Anna Lanahan, "The Attempt of Tammany Hall to Dominate the Brooklyn Democratic Party, 1903-1909" (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Columbia University, 1955), pp. 33-35, 38-41; R.C.E. Brown, History of the State of New York, IV, 99; New York Times, July 12, 1904, p. 2, July 6, 1904, p. 3.

²⁸ New York Times, July 6, 1904, p. 3.

Cockran said that at the meeting of the delegation he proposed a resolution that would include a gold plank but it had been suppressed. After the leaders agreed to eliminate all reference to coinage, Cockran moved that the New York delegates propose an amendment on the floor of the convention to a resolution presented by Hill in the sub-committee of the platform committee. This stated that the discovery of gold had outmoded the money standard as a political issue. Hill's resolution met with defeat partly because the committee wished to avoid a confrontation and partly because they did not know Alton Parker's attitude on money. Cockran's resolution of an amendment also went down to defeat in the delegation caucus with a vote of 50 to 28.²⁹

Cockran had refused to speak on the floor when members of the convention called for it. Hill interpreted Cockran's reluctance as a waiting game in which the New York Congressman was building up energy for the propitious moment for attack, both on platform and against Parker. Therefore, on July 9, Hill and Senator John Daniel, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, asked Champ Clark of Missouri and permanent chairman of the convention, if it would be in order to couple the previous question with the motion to adopt the platform. A motion of the previous question is undebatable and a

²⁹ New York Times, July 12, 1904, p. 2.

maneuver which would result in the adoption of the platform without debate. Clark agreed and according to plan Daniel read the long and tedious platform. The motion to cut off debate was carried with a "whoop." Clark related in his autobiography, My Quarter Century of American Politics, that Cockran left the hall in high "dudgeon." With this out of the way, nominations followed and Parker won on the first ballot.³⁰

Cockran explained a few days later that he left the convention before adjournment because it was the only way to avoid being placed in a position where he would have had to tell the delegates that Judge Parker would not be able to escape crushing defeat. Cockran contended that the nomination of Parker who was without any record on the coinage question, except that he had voted for Bryan, precluded any hope that he would receive even as many electoral votes as the Nebraskan had in 1900. Cockran deplored the convention's silence on the currency issue but he was elated when

³⁰ Champ Clark, My Quarter Century of American Politics, (2 vols., New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), II, 141-143; Democratic National Convention, Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention (St. Louis: July 6-9, 1904), pp. 56, 142, 145. T. J. Sparks of Illinois moved that Cockran address the convention but on July 7 he was not in the hall. The next day, John C. Sheppard of South Carolina made the same suggestion but Cockran was said to be with the Committee on Resolutions. The platform recommended the open door policy in the Orient, anti-trust legislation, labor arbitration, liberalization of the immigration laws; protection of the Panama Canal, a conservation program, direct election of Senators and condemnation of racism.

he found out that after his nomination Alton Parker sent a telegram from New York to William F. Sheehan of the New York delegation at St. Louis that he would not accept the candidacy except upon the understanding that he favored the gold standard.³¹

Parker said that the gold standard had been "irrevocably established by the law," and he could not accept the endorsement "unless the plank is contained in the platform." Parker's communication caused consternation among the delegates. In effect he had repudiated the platform. A struggle followed between southerners and easterners but after "existing conferences and strong debates," reported the New York Times, the leaders and delegates compromised and voted 785 to 190 to send a reply to Parker which read:

The platform adopted by this convention is silent on the question of the monetary standard because it is not regarded by us as a possible issue in this campaign, and only campaign issues were mentioned in the platform. Therefore there is nothing in the views expressed by you in the telegram just received which would preclude a man entertaining them from accepting a nomination on said platform.³²

When Charles Murphy heard of the Parker telegram he sent a wire to Cockran who was in Indianapolis to return to St. Louis by special train. Cockran returned by 4 o'clock in the morning on July 11th, hoping to be in time to address the convention to urge the

³¹ New York Times, July 12, 1904, p. 2.

³² Ibid., July 10, 1904, p. 1.

incorporation of Parker's positions on the platform. He arrived too late. They had adjourned before he arrived. Cockran commented to the reporters that Parker "by his quick action had saved the party from an embarrassing position and immeasurably increased his own strength as a candidate." He added that Parker had "forced the little leaders who were managing, or mismanaging his candidacy to come up to his own high standard." Cockran believed that Parker had won the admiration of the entire nation.³³

Encouraged by the turn of events Cockran campaigned with enthusiasm for Parker. As in the past he attacked the opposition mercilessly. The most difficult thing for the orator to overcome, however, was the apathy of Parker and the Democrats in general. The Judge chose to remain home during most of the campaign.³⁴ Cockran bristled at the lack of conviction among his fellow Democrats. In a letter to Moreton Frewen, Cockran said that Roosevelt was the favorite in the betting. The Democrats seemed afraid to speak out on the issues, Cockran complained. They were unwilling to stake their chances of success on the assumption that their principles were sound. Under the circumstances they could not hope to win. Cockran attributed this hesitation to take direct issue with Roosevelt to the

³³ New York Times, July 11, 1904, p. 8. The trip back had cost Cockran and Charles Murphy \$400; July 12, 1904, p. 2.

³⁴ Mowry, Era of Roosevelt, p. 178.

demoralization which resulted from the continued defeat of his party over the years.³⁵

On September 12, 1904, Roosevelt made public his letter of acceptance. In it he avoided reference to tariff revision. Cockran attacked him for attempting to appear as conservative as Parker and for abdicating to the plunderers of his party by refusing to discuss the tariff. Cockran belittled the President's promises to reform trusts as inadequate if no action on the tariff preceded it. He compared this behavior to that of a doctor undertaking to cure a patient by encouraging a fever. Roosevelt, Cockran said, failed to tell the people wherein lay the good and the evil in trusts. How could he then make a distinction between good and bad trusts, asked the New York Congressman. Roosevelt was the head of a party leading in agitation for a great reform and at the same time unable to specify where the reform would be applied. Actually, declared Cockran, Roosevelt could not upset the system which formed the backbone of his party.³⁶

³⁵ Cockran to Moreton Frewen, September 26, 1904, Letterbook #11, p. 19, Cockran MSS.

³⁶ Cockran, Speech on Theodore Roosevelt's Letter of Acceptance, at Tammany Hall Ratification Meeting, September 14, 1904, Cockran MSS. One of the accusations Cockran made was that the Republicans could not be trusted. He told his audience that after the 1896 victory and shortly before McKinley took office, a commission headed by Senator Edward O. Wolcott of Colorado had visited several European capitals to negotiate an international agreement to establish bimetallism. In the spring 1897 with Secretary Hay's assistance, he submitted a

Cockran received the Tammany renomination for his Congressional seat and ran against the Republican opponent, Henry Carey. Cockran enjoyed great popularity as evidenced by an audience response to him on September 14th at a Tammany rally. When his name was introduced someone yelled "three cheers for the next United States Senator" and this group followed the suggestion vociferously. This response did not compare with the enthusiasm of the audience when Cockran tried to speak or when someone shouted "three cheers for the real leader of Tammany Hall." The New York Times reported that the crowd went wild.³⁷

Cockran tried to work for local Democratic harmony during this campaign. For that reason he consented to be the main orator of a Brooklyn Democratic rally held at Prospect Hall in South Brooklyn on September 17, 1904. He expressed great pleasure at the "get-together spirit" shown at the meeting. He commented at how gratifying

proposal to the British government that if the mints of India were opened to free coinage of silver Germany and France agreed to use a certain quantity of the same metal for coinage. The mints of the United States would also be open to free coinage. When accused of bad trust, the Republicans answered that the results of the Bryan vote in 1896 had alarmed them lest he might carry the country in the next four years. They reasoned that it would be a great political coup if they could accomplish what the Bryanites had talked of. The plan failed because Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer threatened to resign if it passed. The English cabinet would not accept the proposal either.

³⁷

New York Times, September 15, 1904, p. 3.

it was to see "all the elements of the Democratic party determined that whatever may be their differences on local matters, they are a unit upon the one great purpose which animates the hearts of the Democracy throughout the union in this campaign."³⁸ The night before the election, at a Tammany meeting held at Miner's Bowery Theatre, Cockran promised that within forty-eight hours after Congress convened, he would introduce a bill to create a non-partisan commission to investigate the sources of campaign funds. This was in response to the charge made by Judge Parker that the Republican party managers had blackmailed trusts into contributing to its campaign fund.³⁹

Despite all the accusations and diatribes Roosevelt won with an overwhelming victory. He carried thirty-three of the forty-five states with an electoral vote of 343 to Parker's 133. Congress remained Republican dominated with a majority of one hundred in the House of Representatives and twenty-eight in the Senate.⁴⁰ Cockran won his seat in the House of Representatives with a plurality of 9,867 votes. He received a total of 19,856 against Henry Carey's

³⁸ New York Times, September 18, 1904, p. 2.

³⁹ Cockran, Speech Accepting the Renomination by the Democratic Congressional Convention of the Twelfth District for the House of Representatives, October 3, 1904, in Cockran MSS.; New York Times, November 7, 1904, p. 1.

⁴⁰ New York Times, November 10, 1904, p. 8.

9,989.⁴¹

As he had pledged, Cockran, almost immediately upon his return to the chamber, introduced two bills, one for the appointment of a special commission and the other for public disclosure of all contributions exceeding fifty dollars made to political parties at elections for President, Vice President and Congressmen. The amount should be reported to the clerk's office of the United States district where the contribution took place.⁴²

The Galveston Daily News declared that no bill of greater importance had ever been introduced in Congress. The editor had doubts, notwithstanding, about its success. He said that it would be a surprise if it became law during this session. No political party, he pointed out, would directly or openly oppose such a measure because it would look very much like a plea of guilty. Nevertheless if the party in power wished to prove itself in favor of fair elections,

⁴¹ New York Times, November 9, 1904, p. 6.

⁴² United States Congress, Congressional Record, 58th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 5. (H.R. 15581) The amounts had to be specified, with names and addresses included. The statement had to be published within one week in two newspapers supporting the candidates of the opposing parties and in the district where the contribution took place. Failure to file within three days would constitute a felony and was punishable by imprisonment from one to three years. H.R. 15597 provided that the commission be composed of Senior Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the Junior Judge of the Circuit Court and two Representatives in Congress of different political affiliations. A report would be presented to that body on or before January 1, 1906.

impartial legislation and honest administration, declared the newspaper, this would be an opportunity of a lifetime.⁴³ Cockran seemed rather optimistic about his campaign fund bill getting through the House in this session. He said that he would not be surprised if the Elections Committee would report in favor of appointing a commission on the lines outlined in his bill to investigate funds spent in previous national campaigns. If the commission were to be created, its report would likely recommend a measure similar to the one Roosevelt proposed on public disclosure. On this matter nevertheless, he thought that nothing would happen until the next session.⁴⁴ In each Congress following this one Cockran proposed similar legislation and met with failure. No such law passed Congress until after Cockran had left that body.

One of the first debates in which Cockran took part concerned a monetary proposal presented by Representative Charles N. Fowler of New Jersey, Chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Currency.⁴⁵ The Fowler bill as introduced in December 1904, permitted

⁴³ Daily News (Galveston) December 8, 1904, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁴ Cockran to James Carter, January 14, 1905, Ibid. MSS. The House Elections Committee did carry on inquiries about possible legislation on public disclosure. Cockran had testified before the Committee in 1906 and pointed out the advantages of his own bill; The Statement Relative to Contributions to Political Committees on Presidential and Other Campaigns, House of Representatives, March 12, 1906, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet)

⁴⁵ New York Times, December 13, 1904, p. 8.

deposits of government receipts in banks which would act as government depositories. It repealed the three million dollar limit on bank note retirement and provided for recoinage of silver dollars in subsidiary silver coins. The Secretary of the Treasury could use these banks as depositories of surplus public money. They would act as financial agents of the Government as required. The depository banks would receive deposits and pay interest on them. This last provision was proposed in order to stop the abuse of lending money to banks without interest.⁴⁶ The New York Times wrote that the purpose of the bill was to allow the national government to deposit the surplus funds in these banks with proper security. The clause on silver coins would allow the Treasury to recoin silver dollars when it found it to be necessary for the convenience of the public.⁴⁷

Cockran supported many facets of the bill. He agreed that money should be drawn out of sub-treasuries and placed in banks so that in their use they could have a "vivifying" influence on the channels of trade and upgrade business activity. He agreed that the proposal to exact interest from the depository banks followed practical business practices. Surely, he argued, when large deposits are placed

⁴⁶New York Times, December 13, 1904, p. 8; Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 323.

⁴⁷New York Times, January 7, 1905, p. 6.

in public or private institutions it is not unusual to expect interest. Why should different rules apply to government money than to other corporations who would make deposits of equal amounts, he asked. Cockran objected to any proposal whereby the Treasury would set the interest rate rather than having it regulated by market conditions. Unless the rate were fixed by the operations of trade it would nullify the bill and make it inoperative, he said.⁴⁸ The bill failed to pass but even if it had it would have been pigeonholed in the Senate Finance Committee.⁴⁹ Not until 1906 would more extensive proposals for banking control be placed before Congress.⁵⁰

Cockran's career in the House reflects how consistently he maintained many of his staunch convictions not only about trusts, currency and banking but also on armaments. In February 1905, the House of Representatives had before it a bill for the expansion of the navy. Roosevelt, an advocate of an enlarged fleet, lost no opportunity to impress the importance of this subject upon Congress.⁵¹ Cockran, nevertheless, argued against any increase because he feared that it would lead the United States into wars and the eventual loss of its traditional isolation. Objecting to the recent "trebling" and

⁴⁸ Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., pp. 324-325.

⁴⁹ New York Times, January 7, 1905, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), p. 152.

⁵¹ L. White Busbey, Uncle Joe Cannon, p. 223.

"quadrupling" of military expenses, Cockran contended that this country would become one of the most highly armed nations in the world and inevitably follow politics of aggression. He denied that the road to power had to come through military or naval strength. The origins of American might came from peaceful pursuits of industry and commerce and obedience to justice. The root of a nation's vigor was its productivity, he asserted. No nation, he declared, had ever prospered by conquest. On the contrary it led to its ruin, Cockran charged.⁵²

Although Cockran admitted that the appropriation itself would not seriously endanger the security of the United States, "the parting of the way" between the old policy which made her great and the new one, if it did not destroy us, would certainly "injure our greatness," he said.⁵³ An avowed isolationist, he felt that the United States would remain independent so long as the spirit which governed other countries differed from that which guided this one. "Pray God," he said, "we may never end our isolation by abandoning that eminence of justice and peace to engage in the barbaric rivalries of foreign nations."⁵⁴

In December 1905, Cockran found an opportunity once again to address himself to evils of monopolies and trusts. In his message

⁵² Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., pp. 2685-2687.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 2687.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 2689.

to Congress that month the President requested that the body consider regulation of insurance companies. He suggested that the Bureau of Corporations might legitimately have the power to cover insurance cases.⁵⁵ Cockran believed that the President was correct in considering insurance subject to federal regulation. Cockran maintained that large corporations needing public supervision could not be adequately controlled by the States. The New Yorker suggested a creation of a special committee to consider the matter in all its ramifications and to report back to the House whether the present operations of insurance companies were "consistent with the security of the nation" and to suggest remedies within the power of the Congress if abuses were found. For Congress to act on this matter, Cockran believed, would be a first step toward the upgrading not only of such companies but of the whole financial and industrial system. The States proved inadequate to cope with powers of the

⁵⁵ Kolko, Triumph of Conservatism, pp. 90-96. In 1903 the Committee of Insurance prepared a bill to deny the mails to insurance companies not authorized by the insurance departments of the states in which they operated. The bill died. In June 1904 the Bureau of Corporations carried out an investigation to obtain the views of the insurance companies on federal regulation. They favored it. In his annual message of 1904 Roosevelt appealed to Congress to consider whether it had the power to regulate them. Several bills were considered and they all met with defeat. Smaller insurance companies feared federal regulation would put them out of business; The Supreme Court case, Paul vs. Virginia, in 1868 ruled that it did not come within the definition of interstate commerce. Justice Stephen Field handed down the decision in which he argued that insurance was a contract and a contract was not commerce. The Constitution, he maintained, empowered Congress only with the right to regulate commerce; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 59th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), p. 453.

insurance companies, he claimed.⁵⁶ Cockran's hopes for federal control were soon dashed when in late March, 1906, the House Judiciary Committee decided that Congress did not have the power to regulate insurance companies.⁵⁷

In 1906 Cockran addressed himself to three other major legislative issues, that of the Hepburn, the Pure Food and Drug and the Meat Inspection bills. The Hepburn bill attracted his interest because it offered him a perfect vehicle to debate the right of the Congress to control at least one facet of trusts. By 1905, railroad rate regulation had become a major issue all over the nation. In the Middle West the rise of the State reform movement had given a new impetus to the section's old anti-railroad bias. Governor Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin and other midwestern State executives who had met with success in intrastate regulation, united in a petition to the President to recommend legislation on interstate rates. An interstate commerce convention which met in St. Louis asked Congress for similar action. Even some conservative Eastern elements agreed that the time had come for federal statutes on rates. By 1905 the Interstate Commerce Commission had been shorn of its power by the Supreme Court so that it represented nothing more than a "statistical

⁵⁶Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 453, 464, 473-475.

⁵⁷Kolko, Triumph of Conservatism, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁸See, e.g., Journal of Research, 1911, 16, 1-11.

bureau."⁵⁸ With the urging of Attorney-General Philander C. Knox, President Roosevelt, in his annual message of December 6, 1904 called for a measure that would vest the Interstate Commerce Commission with power when a rate had been challenged, and "after full hearing found to be unreasonable, to decide, subject to judicial review, what shall be a reasonable rate to take its place; the ruling of the Commission to take effect immediately, . . . until it is reversed by the court of review."⁵⁹

The House considered two bills. The Democrats supported the Davey bill which provided the Interstate Commerce Commission with authority to put a shipping rate in force on very short notice. It stipulated that a rate would go into effect at once and not be suspended until the court passed on it. The House, however, adopted the Esch-Townshend bill which embodied Roosevelt's recommendations and which were more stringent than the Democratic measure.⁶⁰ The Senate took no action on it.⁶¹

⁵⁸Mowry, Era of Roosevelt, p. 198.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 199. Fowler, Spooner, p. 340, Fred L. Israel, ed., The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents 1790-1966 (3 vols. New York: Chelsea House, Robert Hector, 1966), II, 2113.

⁶⁰New York Times, January 24, 1905, p. 9; February 7, 1905, p. 1, February 10, 1905, p. 1. On February 9th, the House voted 326-17 for the Esch-Townshend measure. The minority substitute (Davey bill) was rejected 186-154.

⁶¹Fowler, Spooner, p. 341. At the time that the bill came to the Senate, the upper chamber had been busily involved in a debate on the impeachment of Charles Swayne, judge of the District Court of Florida; Cockran also spoke on the Swayne question in the House. Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., Appendix, p. 87.

On December 6, 1905 the President once again requested that Congress consider rate regulation, but a more conservative bill than that proposed the year before. He called for a body that would have the power to determine whether rates were reasonable or not. If unreasonable it should prescribe "maximum reasonable rate " to go into effect "within a reasonable time." He also recommended that a court review the decisions of whatever administrative body would be setting rates. He did not mention the Interstate Commerce Commission nor call for "immediate" decision on the rulings.⁶²

Cockran shared Roosevelt's sentiment on railroad legislation. When William P. Hepburn of Iowa, chairman of the House Committee, on Interstate Commerce, introduced a rate bill incorporating Roosevelt's recommendations Cockran voted for its quick passage with the 345 other supporters of the proposal.⁶³ While he believed that it did not meet all of the inequities, he said it would be a decisive step toward emancipating the industrial life of the country, and one of the most important measures considered by the Congress "since the reconstruction of the Southern States after the war of secession." He refuted the charges that regulation of rates would diminish railroad earnings.

⁶²Israel, The State of the Union Messages, III, 2148.

⁶³Fowler, Spooner, p. 343. The Hepburn bill passed the House by a vote of 346 to 7; Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 5164. The year before Cockran favored the Esch-Townshend bill but voted "present" as a protest against Speaker Cannon's ruling which limited debate on amendments.

The object of the act was to insure efficient service impartially and at reasonable cost to the consumer. He explained that an aggrieved citizen, who considered that he had been overcharged could ask for rate review. The Interstate Commerce Commission could substitute a new rate which would be proper and just. Above all, this bill, if it became law, could act as a buffer against the encroachments of socialism.⁶⁴ As for setting rates so low as to be confiscatory, he answered that it seemed illogical that the courts which had dedicated themselves to the protection of private property would allow this to happen. He said, "the idea that such a rate would be tolerated by the same courts which uniformly and without exception, have set aside confiscatory rates, is not a conclusion reached by logical processes, but a figment of the mind."⁶⁵

The measure encountered opposition in the Senate. One of the phrases in the measure specified that the rate regulation should go into effect within thirty days and be observed by the railroads "unless the same shall be . . . suspended or set aside by a court of competent jurisdiction." Some of the Senators among them John Coit Spooner, Republican from Wisconsin, believed the phrase to be ambiguous and the bill poorly constructed and unconstitutional.⁶⁶ The main battle in the Senate centered on the nature of court review and

⁶⁴ Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 2232-2233.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 2233.

⁶⁶ Fowler, Spoooner, p. 343.

the rapidity with which the commission's rulings on rates would go into effect. The progressives in both parties wanted to limit court review of the Commission's decisions to legal procedures and prevent injunctive suspension of the rates until the court had established its findings. The conservatives wanted a broad court review embracing both procedural and substantive matters, including the reasonableness of the rates. They thought rates set by the Commission should be suspended pending court action.⁶⁷

While the debates continued in the Senate, in April Cockran commented in the House about the controversy over the bill. He said that the bill did not empower the railway company to "sue out an injunction" restraining the action by the Commission because the latter had not the power to do any act which could injure the carrier.⁶⁸ He objected to the conservative Senators' argument that the bill failed to provide for a judicial review of all orders made by the Commission. He interpreted that, in a letter to Winston Churchill, as arguments coming from opponents who could no longer hope to defeat the bill and had settled on emasculating it by proposing to make every proceeding of the Commission subject to review by the courts.⁶⁹ To those who argued that the Hepburn bill would be unconstitutional,

⁶⁷ Pringle, Roosevelt, pp. 297-298; Mowry, Era of Roosevelt, pp. 203-205.

⁶⁸ Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 5166.

⁶⁹ Cockran to Churchill, May 18, 1906, Cockran MSS.

Cockran said that if the Commission would be required to do was to decide on the reasonableness of rates. It could not touch any of the railroads' property he reminded them. The bill, he asserted aimed to bring the carriers into court, not to shut them down.⁷⁰

A compromise was finally arrived at in the Senate when the members agreed to support the Allison amendment which left it up to the courts to decide the extent of their power to review rates.⁷¹

President Roosevelt accepted this compromise because he did not consider broad or narrow review as important as rate making power of the Commission. Dorothy Ganfield Fowler, in her biography of John Coit Spooner, writes real victors were the Middle Western Senators who wanted regulation but that it be constitutional.⁷²

On June 23, 1906 the House adopted the conference report on the bill with a vote of 216 to 4. The act that emerged gave the Interstate Commerce Commission power to set aside a railroad rate schedule on complaint of a shipper as unreasonable and prescribe rates subject to court review. Cockran voted for the final bill.⁷³

⁷⁰Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 5165-5166.

⁷¹Pringle, Roosevelt, p. 297; Mowry, Era of Roosevelt, pp. 204-205; Fowler, Spooner, pp. 344-347.

⁷²Fowler, Spooner, p. 347.

⁷³New York Times, June 24, 1906; p. 6; Mowry, Era of Roosevelt, p. 205. It empowered the Commission to examine railroad books and to recommend uniform bookkeeping procedures. It also placed private car lines and railroad terminals under the supervision of the Commission.

Cockran supported the recommendations of the President for a law regulating interstate commerce of misbranded and adulterated food. Harvey Wiley, chief chemist of the Department of Agriculture had for years sought to get the Federal Government to pass legislation. He had carried on investigations of food adulteration and tested the effects of chemical preservatives on people. Finally he succeeded in convincing Roosevelt of the need for reform. Speaker Cannon had blocked attempts at such legislation but Roosevelt told him that the need was imperative.⁷⁴ In response to the charge that such regulation would infringe on the power of States, Cockran declared that when the activities of the citizens of a State touched on people outside of its borders such action was necessary.⁷⁵ He argued that he would be the last to sanction the Federal Government's exceeding its constitutional authority. In the case, however, where the State has now power to protect its inhabitants against the invasion of poisonous food by inspection at the source, such power must logically rest with Congress. Under the power to regulate interstate commerce, the Federal Government, he said, should intervene for the protection of the consumer.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Oscar E. Anderson, Jr., "The Pure Food Issue: A Republican Dilemma: 1906-1912," The American Historical Review, LXI (April 1956), pp. 551-552.

⁷⁵ Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 8959.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 8992-8993.

The bill passed the House with a provision that the Secretary of Agriculture, in order to determine standards of food products and wholesomeness of preservation or other substances added to foods, could call on the standards committee of the Association of the Official Agricultural Chemists and the Association of State Dairy and Food Departments. The Senate approved the bill but without the last provision. Generally it prohibited from interstate or foreign commerce food or drugs that were adulterated or misbranded within the meaning of certain general definitions. Violation was punishable by fine or imprisonment or both. Dealers were immune from prosecution when they could produce a guaranty from middlemen or manufacturers that the article concerned did not violate the law. The Federal district courts could order seized, misbranded and adulterated products for condemnation. The Secretaries of Treasury, of Commerce and Labor, and of Agriculture could carry out the law. Food and drugs would be examined by the Bureau of Chemistry. The weakness in the bill came from the Senate version which did not make clear the role of the Secretaries, as did the House bill, on how to arrive at standards.⁷⁷ The law can be marked as revolutionary in that it was the first major effort of the Federal Government to regulate the health of citizens. To many this is considered an encroachment on the police power of the states.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Anderson, "Pure Food," pp. 552, 570; New York Times, June 24, 1906, p. 6. The Act passed the House with a vote of 240 to 17, June 28, 1906, p. 1. The Pure Food and Drug Act became law on June 23, 1906.

⁷⁸Fowler, Spooner, pp. 334-335.

While Cockran had begun to move more rapidly in the direction of progressivism he did not fit comfortably into the definition of a progressive with respect to his attitude toward immigration. Cockran advocated a liberal immigration policy during all of his political life and this period was no exception. Richard Hofstadter maintains that hostility to immigrants stemmed most from the "extreme ends of the political spectrum"; the "ultraconservatives" and "those Progressives whose views were most influenced by the Populists."⁷⁹ From the close of the Civil War to the outbreak of the first World War, the growth of American industry and the absence of restriction caused a steady stream of immigrants which reached its zenith in 1907. The United States had been accustomed to heavy immigration but the native born American had difficulty in adjusting himself to the shift in type of newcomers which was especially noticeable after 1900. The new immigrant instead of arriving from northern Europe came from the southern and eastern regions. Crowding of these people into slums created conditions which horrified the native Yankee.⁸⁰ The latter also resented the power local municipal machines had over the immigrant. The progressives saw all these factors as dangerous to American life and to needed reforms.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, pp. 178-179.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 176-177.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 182.

Pressure to alter the policy on immigration came from labor unions as well. Samuel Gompers said that the industrial society could no longer absorb the increasing numbers of men who had arrived.⁸² Other reasons proposed for stricter legislation came from those who wanted to see uniformity in the naturalization process, and believed that the Federal Government had to set the pattern so that states could upgrade their laws.⁸³

Cockran took the position on immigration similar to that of the local machine politicians who wished to see liberal provisions prevail. That is why when the chairman of the House Labor Committee Augustus Gardner, Republican from Massachusetts, introduced a reform immigration law in the House in 1906 Cockran argued against it. He objected specifically to the provision which required that immigrants take a literacy test. He claimed that this provision, which could be considered an educational qualification on the immigrant at the port of entry as well as upon his application for citizenship, was discriminatory. It created a two class society by placing the native American on a plan different from that of the naturalized citizen.⁸⁴ The bill, he maintained, would shield the ignorant native

⁸²Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor: An Autobiography (2 vols. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1925), II, 161-164.

⁸³Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 231-232.

⁸⁴Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., pp.7771-7772.

while the newcomer would not only have to read and write his own language but also that of this country. He attacked the promoters of the bill as aiming to create a large alien class in the heart of the population.⁸⁵ Enough of the members of the House had agreed with Cockran, including Speaker Cannon, so that when the bill did pass the educational test was excluded.⁸⁶

In 1907 a series of bank failures in New York turned an economic crisis which had been mounting for months into a panic. Alarmed depositors began to withdraw their accounts. The Knickerbocker Bank became the first victim and closed its doors. This failure precipitated runs on other financial institutions including the Trust Company of America and the Lincoln Trust Company.⁸⁷ In an effort to increase the supply of money, made especially stringent by restrictions imposed

⁸⁵ Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 7875; United States Congress, Congressional Record 60th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 872, 880, 883. In 1908 attempts to restrict immigration once again came up in the House. Proponents argued that too many new arrivals glutted the nations' labor market which already suffered from excessive unemployment. Cockran maintained that the immigrant had not caused the conditions but was actually a victim of them.

⁸⁶ New York Times, June 26, 1906, p. 7; Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 231-232. The Act of 1906 tried to prevent fraudulent naturalization. It also removed a head tax on diplomats and reduced it on all other to two dollars.

⁸⁷ Wesley C. Mitchell, Business Cycles and Their Causes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), p. 75-77.

by New York banks on cash payments, the Secretary of the Treasury deposited \$35,000,000 in national banks.⁸⁸

Although the action of the Treasury added to the supply of money in circulation, it was not enough. Consequently, banks resorted to increasing their issue of notes and the importation of gold. The most crucial manifestation of the panic appeared in the demand for short term loans. Most banks took care of their regular customers. Those enterprises, however, that relied largely upon loans through commercial paper and brokers had no such protection. Business failures increased and the panic spread rapidly from New York to the interior.⁸⁹

In November, after receiving a request from the President for suggestions on how to check the panic, Cockran answered in a long memorandum reflecting a classical and conservative view of the causes and their remedies. He suggested that Roosevelt interfere but only to punish those who had brought about the unstable conditions through their mismanagement of funds. Cockran wanted Roosevelt to publicly expose the promulgators of the crisis in order to discredit them.

Cockran rejected the allegations that excessive demand for money or that recent government railroad regulations precipitated the crisis. Hoarding and the scramble for money, he contended, resulted

⁸⁸ Mitchell, Business Cycles, p. 77.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 78-79, 88-89.

instead from the depositors suspicions that dishonest bankers would misuse their money. Cockran recommended that the government refrain from interfering with the cycle but allow it to run its natural course. He proposed, however, that to restore public confidence the wrongdoers be punished and banks be made to report their total reserves. An informed populace would inevitably make rational decisions, Cockran asserted, and within thirty days one could begin to see a general revival in industry.⁹⁰

Despite Cockran's analysis the need to increase the money supply immediately still remained to be solved. In Congress, Senator Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island submitted a bill designed to allow for the creation of emergency currency backed by State, municipal and railroad bonds. The New York Board of Trade, and the Merchants' Association of New York attacked this legislation because they considered it a conservative effort to sustain the value of railroad bonds. The National Association of Manufacturers, on the other hand, called for currency backed by commercial assets without endorsing any specific bill. Roosevelt was partial to the measure presented by Aldrich. In late March, the Aldrich proposal passed the Senate, and the House of Representatives held hearings on it in April. Aldrich Representative Fowler (who had his own legislative recommendation)

⁹⁰ Cockran to Roosevelt, November 24, 1907, Cockran MSS.

and the American Banking Association joined forces and presented a compromise solution which came to the House in the form of the Vreeland Bill.⁹¹

Vreeland sought to allow government bonds and commercial paper to be used as collateral for an emergency currency issued by cooperative national banks meeting certain capital and surplus requirements. Cockran considered this as a radical innovation. He denied that it would serve as a temporary shield against the threats to the nation's economic stability. Rather, he said, the recommendations would drive banks from discounting into investment whenever business slackened. If it became law, Cockran warned, little or no commercial paper would be available when needed. By tempting banks to speculate the provisions would aggravate economic problems because the government's function would be to support faithless banking officials. Despite the solid opposition from the Democrats, the Aldrich-Vreeland bill became law on May 31, 1908, but was not utilized until 1914.⁹²

⁹¹ Kolko, Triumph of Conservatism, pp. 156-157. Representative Edward B. Vreeland presented the bill to the Republican caucus in the House; New York Times, January 30, 1908, p. 1.

⁹² United States Congress, Congressional Record, 60th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 6285-6286; New York Times, March 5, 1908, p. 6. The House Democrats from New York stood solidly opposed to the Aldrich bill; May 7, 1908, p. 1; May 13, 1908, p. 6; May 15, 1908, p. 4; May 16, 1908, p. 3; May 25, 1908, p. 3; May 28, 1908, p. 1; May 31, 1908, p. 1. Between May 6th and May 31 the Vreeland bill was shunted back and forth between the House and Senate conference committees. In the House, Vreeland

Before Cockran finished his term in Congress, he made a last effort to introduce a major bill. As a lawyer, extensive delays in the courts had irked him. He became an ardent supporter of judicial reform and in May, 1908 he introduced a bill in the House for the creation of a judicial commission. Its task would be to establish a system by which every legal action which came before a United States court would be completed within three months.⁹³ He proposed that appeals should be acted upon within ten days after a decision. Cockran argued that if a party could not decide within that period whether he had been sufficiently injured by a ruling to take it further then he could not justify any appeal.⁹⁴ Despite its timeliness, the

and the conferees attempted to "perfect" the bill so that it would please everybody. On May 14th, they presented a compromise measure which provided for a Clearing House Association made up of member banks geographically distributed and with the power to issue emergency currency. After passing the House with a vote of 184 to 145 it was sent to the Senate where it met with a "violent end" wrote the Times. The Senate conferees immediately substituted a modified Aldrich bill which they presently sent to the House. After an angry protest Vreeland finally agreed to meet with Aldrich privately and on May 24 they presented their compromise. The measure would permit banks to issue currency on state, county and municipal bonds. On the 26th of May, the House conference committee presented this new Vreeland bill to the floor and it was approved by a vote of 166 to 140. On May 31 the Senate, after a filibuster by Senator Robert La Follette, Republican from Wisconsin and solid opposition from the Democrats against the Aldrich-Vreeland measure, the members voted 43 to 22 to make it a law. On the same night, President Roosevelt signed it.

⁹³Cockran, A Bill Creating a Special Commission on Delays in Court 60th Cong., 1st Sess., May 20, 1908, Cockran MSS.; Cockran, "The Law's Delays," Address at the 29th Annual Meeting of the Ohio State Bar Association, July 8, 1908, pp. 34-35, Cockran MSS. (Pamphlet)

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 35.

bill remained buried in the House judiciary committee.

Cockran's record in Congress demonstrates that he had gradually become a supporter of many of Roosevelt's recommendations. Concurrently he began to break his ties with Tammany. Cockran's political metamorphosis symbolized the breakdown of the old political alignments. As early as October 1907 Cockran registered concern about the disintegration taking place within the parties. He maintained, in a letter to Moreton Frewen that "no political parties and very little politics" existed. The burning question, he said was whether the March 4, 1909 inauguration would witness the termination of the present administration or the opening of a new one for Roosevelt. The enthusiasm was not for Roosevelt as the embodiment of an idea but for him as a man. Cockran claimed that Roosevelt had completely dominated the country. He admitted, nonetheless, that the Republicans seemed to be hostile to him. Hatred among them had become almost a mania. If the President should declare himself a candidate, claimed Cockran, it was doubtful if one vote would be cast against him at the convention. If Roosevelt were to be turned down by his party Cockran said that he would not be too surprised if the Democrats would not offer him the nomination. Party contests over principles were likely to become a thing of the past and the contest would be personal instead. Cockran believed that Roosevelt's purposes were lofty and he intended to make the moral

law supreme in the commercial as well as in American political life.⁹⁵

Despite his popularity, Roosevelt, who had stated in 1904 that he would not be a candidate, decided not to run for a third term and proposed William Howard Taft as his Republican successor. Bryan received the Democratic party's nomination as its presidential candidate. Cockran, because of his rift with Murphy, did not attend the convention or campaign actively in this election.

⁹⁵Cockran to Moreton-Frewen, October 4, 1907, Letterbook #15, pp. 114-116, Cockran MSS.

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE: COCKRAN'S RELATIONS WITH THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND PROGRESSIVISM, 1909-1915

During the years between 1909 and 1915 Cockran devoted himself to many diverse activities. He resumed the full-time practice of law, became an active member of the New York County Lawyers' Association, and went on speaking tours in behalf of the peace movement. He left the Democratic party in 1909 and once again became a political independent. He did not return officially to Tammany Hall until 1919. He was convinced that the existing parties were disintegrating and that the only hope for economic and political reform lay in a new movement led by Theodore Roosevelt. Cockran envisioned Roosevelt as the leader to revive Christian principles and morality in American political life. After Roosevelt's last annual message in 1908 when he called for a reexamination of national policy and broad economic and social reform through government regulation Cockran praised him for recognizing his duty to Americans. He called the President's message inspiring and one for which "we may all hail

him . . ."¹ When Roosevelt declared himself the third major candidate in the 1912 Presidential campaign Cockran affiliated himself with the Roosevelt forces. Disenchanted political leaders, reformers, independent Democrats, and wealthy men who shared Roosevelt's ideas on trusts and the role of government in the modern industrial state, rallied to Roosevelt's cause. Even the rank and file middle class, many of whom had tired of Taft's policies, joined Roosevelt.²

As early as 1910, New York progressive Republicans had begun to break down the control of the Old Guard in the State. Republican Governor Charles E. Hughes, unpopular with the conservative element, persuaded Roosevelt to join him and others in opposition to the reactionary local bosses by accepting the temporary chairmanship of the State nominating convention. Hoping to strengthen the national administration and to prevent a resurgence of "standpat" Republicanism, and rebuffed by Taft who sided with the Old Guard, Roosevelt responded to the entreaties of his friends. He accepted the temporary chairmanship of the State nominating convention, defeating for that place James

¹United States Congress, Congressional Record, 60th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 1493-1495, 1497; Cockran to Theodore Roosevelt, February 6, 1915, Roosevelt MSS.; Library of Congress.

²John Blum, The Republican Roosevelt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 149; Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), pp. 424-425.

S. Sherman, Vice-President under Taft and conservative member of the party. The convention nominated Henry L. Stimson, a Roosevelt choice, as their gubernatorial candidate.³

Among the Democrats, too, internal discussion had caused members to leave the party. Cockran's expulsion from Tammany by Murphy did not deter Long Island Democrats from offering Cockran the nomination for a seat in the House of Representatives. He refused because he did not want to create the impression that he still supported the views of the "reactionary" Democrats. Rather, he wanted it known that he would align himself with the new order of politics in the state, that which "stood for enforcing the elemental moralities in government." Instead, Cockran stumped the East Side of New York City, for Henry L. Stimson.⁴

³ Blum, Republican Roosevelt, p. 143; Nicholas Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt: The Man as I Knew Him, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1967), pp. 72-73; Herbert Rosenthal, "The Progressive Movement in New York State, 1906-1914" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1954), pp. 250-252; Arthur Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), pp. 14, 22. Stimson had been a law partner of Elihu Root and United States District Attorney; Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), pp. 134-138.

⁴ Cockran to Moreton Frewen, October 28, 1910, Cockran MSS.

The outcome of the election proved disappointing to Cockran and the progressives because Stimson was defeated very badly by the Democratic victor John A. Dix, an up-state wallpaper manufacturer and chairman of the State Committee. The Democrats had once again returned to power in the State.⁵ New Yorkers did not look upon Roosevelt with the same enthusiasm as did Cockran.⁶

In 1911 Cockran began to develop a close advisory relationship with Roosevelt. The rift between Taft and the former President had become public and bitter. In the winter of that year, Taft had announced that his administration would institute an antitrust suit against the United States Steel Corporation as violators of the

⁵R. C. E. Brown, The History of the State of New York, IV, 191. Dix received 689,700 votes and Stimson 622,299. The Assembly had 85 Democrats and 63 Republicans and 1 Independent Democrat. The Senate had 29 Democrats and 21 Republicans. The Democrats also elicited 23 of the 37 congressmen; Morison, Turmoil and Tradition, p. 142.

⁶Arthur Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 18-19. After this rebuff Roosevelt left for his well-known tour in which he explained his new nationalism to the nation. Many eastern conservatives considered Roosevelt a virtual threat to this country's freedom and any candidate whom he sponsored carried the taint. After reading Herbert Croly's Promise of American Life, however, he formulated a better conception of his new ideas. At Osawatimie, Kansas, on August 31, he sounded the keynote of a dynamic democracy which recognized concentration in industry and the need for federal control that would protect labor. The New Nationalism became the theme of the 1912 campaign; Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York State," pp. 317-322. In the eastern part of New York State Roosevelt had been characterized as being too radical and in the western section, too conservative.

Sherman Act. In 1907, under Roosevelt's aegis the company had formed a combination with the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company. The now retired President looked at the administration policy as an attack on him. In addition, he considered Taft's attempts to restore competition as reactionary. A more realistic approach to business activities would be for the President to promote the creation of an industrial commission similar to the Interstate Commerce Commission, as regulatory. To destroy large organizations indiscriminately was ignoring an inevitable trend in modern economics. As late as October 1911, Roosevelt had not responded to the urging of his friends to run as a Presidential candidate in 1912. After the Taft announcement in December 1911 Roosevelt agreed to enter the race for the Republican nomination.⁷

During this period Cockran had his closest contacts with Roosevelt. They were agreed that if the government did not deal with the problems created by the twentieth century industrial society, the people would turn in disgust toward socialism. Mutuality of interest brought both men into close political cooperation between the years 1909 and 1914. Cockran expressed ideas which corresponded to a large extent with Roosevelt's new nationalism. During the previous ten years Cockran had often expressed fear that judicial usurpation of legislative power weakened the American system. By 1909 much

⁷George Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), pp. 191-192.

damage had been done, he maintained. The courts had struck down the attempts of the National and State Governments to deal with economic and social grievances of the working class. In October 1909, at a Columbus Day banquet, he told his audience that the low ebb to which representative bodies had sunk could be attributed to the obstructionist policies of the judiciary. The justices argued inconsistently, he declared. The Federal courts frustrated any attempts by Congress to alleviate abuses with the argument that they interfered with states' rights, even at the risk of allowing wrongs to go unresolved. Similarly, when States tried some measure of relief either through the courts or legislatures the same "beneficiaries of evil" (special interest groups as well as the courts) insisted that the matters involved belonged within the jurisdiction of the national government or were violations of the due process clause of the constitution.⁸

Cockran contended that a close examination of political conditions throughout the world showed representative government to be in peril. In this country, he attributed that trouble to the precedent set by the Marbury v. Madison decision which had set limitations on Congress. Since then, legislative power had declined steadily. Con-

⁸Cockran, Speech on Government Delivered at a Columbus Day Banquet, October 12, 1909, Cockran MSS.

situational changes, he contended, tended to further reduce and limit it. Cockran argued that those people who maintained they wanted to keep Congressional power in check in order to prevent its abuse could apply that same proposition with equal force to granting the national legislature any responsibility at all.⁹

He did not single out the courts alone; Cockran also blamed the executive branch for its part in contributing to the decline of Congress. He contended that in the past twenty years no law of any importance had originated within that body but instead every bill suggested, particularly in the past two years, had been drafted by some member of the executive department.¹⁰

Throughout his life, Cockran contended that the evils in the American system were perpetuated by those who sought power for its own sake and particularly wealth at the expense of others. He meant political bosses and unchecked corporate leaders. He frequently talked about the misuse of power as destructive of democratic society. Cockran said that he who has power must refrain from using it for his own benefit if he wishes to survive its bad effects. To turn it to personal

⁹Cockran, Speech at a Columbus Day Banquet, October 12, 1909, Cockran MSS.; "Representative Government," Address Before the New York County Lawyers' Association, May 5, 1910, Ibid.

¹⁰Cockran, "Representative Government," Ibid. Cockran said that since the passage of the Sherman Silver Purchase Law of 1890 (the last to have come from the Congressmen themselves), the Repeal of the Sherman Law in 1893, the Wilson Tariff of 1894, the Dingley Tariff of 1897, the Philippine Acts, and railroad rate legislation originated from the office of the President.

gratification, he maintained, inevitably causes the downfall of the possessor. Wherever power exists it has to be exercised chiefly for its own preservation. Thus the person who abuses it must never be content with his lot, he pointed out. Similarly, undue attention to the accumulation of wealth tends to act as an obstacle to happiness. Since neither wealth nor power could lead to personal peace, Cockran argued, the only way for a man to come to terms with himself must be through personal, constructive achievement.¹¹

When Roosevelt decided to enter the race for the Presidency he consulted Cockran about a speech he was going to make before the Ohio State Constitutional Convention in early 1912. Cockran suggested that a relevant subject would be judicial interference with the legislative process. He cautioned Roosevelt to avoid reference to direct primaries or amendments to the Sherman Law because they were purely legislative matters. To discuss them before a constitutional convention would sacrifice valuable time which might otherwise be employed more profitably on matters upon which the delegates could act effectively. Another reason for limiting the subject of his speech would be to assure publicity. Since Roosevelt would be offering a recommendation not for the recall of judges but for the recall of judicial decisions as an alternative, the press would be impelled to report his statements.¹²

¹¹Cockran, Address to Graduates of Georgetown College (Washington, D. C.) June 1899; Address to Graduates of St. Johnsbury Academy (Vermont) June 15, 1916, Cockran MSS.

¹²Cockran to Roosevelt, February 8, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.

Cockran believed that Roosevelt would be appealing to a more conservative element by this proposal and it might well prove to be effective in gathering additional support. If only a small portion of his speech were to be mentioned in the press people throughout the nation would demand copies of the entire address.¹³

Unfortunately, Cockran's advice hurt rather than helped Roosevelt. The recall of judicial decision turned out to be a weak point. After the Columbus debacle, Roosevelt was assailed bitterly rather than praised by conservatives who thought of the court as a sacred cow. Roosevelt also alienated many industrialists who might otherwise have supported him on his trust policy.¹⁴

Cockran believed that recall of judicial decisions was a milder remedy than that of the more extreme proposal for the removal of judges. He contended that he had no right to condemn a remedial proposal which had found much favor throughout the nation unless he offered an alternative. Roosevelt's position appeared to meet that requirement.¹⁵

¹³Cockran to Roosevelt, February 8, 1912, Roosevelt MSS., Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 215, 217; Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York State," pp. 373, 388. Until 1911, Roosevelt had little patience with recall of judges but in late 1911 he changed his mind and in an article in Outlook, he presented his arguments in favor of presenting judicial decisions to the public for approval. If the people of a state reject the ruling of a court then the decision would become null and void. He excluded the Supreme Court from this subject.

¹⁴Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 216-217.

¹⁵Cockran to Charles Stuart Guthrie, May 16, 1912, Letterbook #20, p. 467, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to G. L. Rives, March 13, 1906, Cockran MSS.

In early February the former assemblyman, Lindon Bates, Jr. organized the Roosevelt League of New York State to gather support for a Roosevelt bandwagon. He limited its activities, however, to New York City. Outside the metropolitan area Roosevelt affiliates proposed delegates to the Republican convention in only two Congressional districts. Most of the districts were controlled by enrolled Republicans and supporters of the local organizations. If Roosevelt backers wanted to run there they had little chance of winning under the extant New York State primaries law.¹⁶

During March and the first part of April, it looked as if President Taft would easily win the Republican nomination. He was assured of delegates from New York, the South, Indiana and Kentucky, just to mention a few of the states. Roosevelt also lost to La Follette in the North Dakota primary. About the middle of April, however, Roosevelt's fortunes began to turn. He won the Illinois direct primary by two to one. Later he succeeded in California, Minnesota, Nebraska Maryland, and South Dakota primaries. In May, the competition be-

¹⁶Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York State," p. 396. The New York State legislature had passed a direct primary law which provided that anti-organization delegates could be placed on the ballot by a petition signed by five percent of the enrolled Republicans in the district from which he came. Each signature had to be attested to by a notary public. Roosevelt wanted a preferential primary law to weaken the control of the party bosses.

came increasingly heated and both Taft and he toured the country.¹⁷ Cockran wrote to Frewen that the canvass had revealed growing support for Roosevelt despite opposition by party leaders and newspapers.¹⁸ In Massachusetts, every member of Congress from that state was on the stump against him. No one expected the sweep he made in Illinois, either, and the results in Pennsylvania literally astounded everyone, wrote Cockran. The New York lawyer, felt that he might carry one-half of the delegates owing to information which he had received from the coal regions of the state, but he was "utterly unprepared" for Roosevelt's overwhelming victory. Roosevelt proved to be proportionally stronger than Taft in the states having direct primaries. The delegates pledged to Taft had all been selected, however, by the old caucus-convention method. On the whole, Cockran thought that Roosevelt's nomination was an outside probability, but doubted that he could be elected. The fierce pre-convention struggle had engendered too many bitter antagonisms. The bitter hostility between Taft and the former President seemed to Cockran to be unprecedented between men in the same party. He asserted that Roosevelt's chance of success would be strongest if the delegates at the convention defeated him by "obviously unfair use of the party machinery," and he would then run

¹⁷ Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York State," p. 403; Mowry, Roosevelt and Progressive, p. 233.

¹⁸ Cockran to Frewen, May 10, 1912, Letterbook #20, p. 452, Cockran MSS.

as an independent on a platform charging that both parties were under the control of the same interests. Such an issue, maintained Cockran could conceivably bring about a Roosevelt election victory in 1912.¹⁹

In June, the convention rejected the majority of Roosevelt delegates. This ruined any opportunity of his getting the Republican endorsement. After Taft had received the Republican nomination for the Presidency Roosevelt's backers bolted and planned for their own convention to present Roosevelt to the American people as an independent candidate.²⁰ On June 22, Roosevelt and his backers moved to Orchestra Hall, Chicago where the 344 delegates who had refrained from voting at the Republican meeting pledged their support to the

¹⁹Cockran to Frewen, May 10, 1912, pp. 453-454, Ibid.; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 236. He had 298 delegates to La Follette's 36 and Taft's 48 as a result of the primary elections. This indicated that a large number of Republicans had turned to the progressives; Cockran to Frewen, [?] 1912, Cockran MSS. Earlier Cockran wrote to Frewen that the struggle in the party would leave so much bitterness that the Democratic candidate would win easily. Cockran thought that Roosevelt might have a good chance, however, on a third ticket.

²⁰Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 239-240, 245-253. When the convention met on June 18, of the 254 contested seats the committee had awarded 235 to Taft and only 19 to Roosevelt although he was entitled to 30 more; Nicholas Murray Butler, Across the Busy Years: Recollections and Reflections (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), pp. 240, 243. Butler says that the two factions were so evenly divided that the control of the convention would depend upon the temporary roll made up by the National Committee after hearing the contests which were presented to them for action. The committee finally decided in favor of the Taft delegates. Taft received 561 votes and Roosevelt 107. The nomination went to Taft on the first ballot.

former president. They planned to meet on August 5, 1912 to write a platform and to nominate their candidates.²¹

On July 2, 1912 Woodrow Wilson received the Democratic party's nomination at Baltimore. This was the death blow to Roosevelt's third term chance. Wilson's record as Governor of New Jersey between 1910 and 1912 proved that he had at least comparable ability to Roosevelt as a leader. His victory at the Democratic convention caused no open rupture in the party while the Republicans remained unsettled with internal strife. Although a conservative prior to his election as chief executive of New Jersey, Wilson instituted an impressive progressive program during the two years in that post. His political ideology seemed less radical than Roosevelt's but more liberal than Taft's. He advocated Jeffersonian democracy and states' rights and believed that Federal power should be used as a means to eliminate special privilege and barriers to the development of individual opportunity. For business he recommended that the Federal government restore competition, and for the underdog who wanted social legislation, he denied any such power in the Federal Constitution; it was merely another demand for class legislation.²²

²¹Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, p. 396; "Reminiscences of William A. Prendergast," III, 417-418. Prendergast headed a committee representing New York. The delegates planned to organize a new party.

²²Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 8, 13, 19-21; "Reminiscences of William A. Prendergast," III, 416; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 277-278.

Cockran's predictions seemed to be accurate. William Prendergast in his memoirs recalled the scene in Cockran's home when Roosevelt received the news of Wilson's nomination. He said "the colonel" stood in the doorway and simply announced, "Mr. Wilson has been nominated by the Democratic National Convention," Roosevelt continued to stand where he was, his face "betraying no emotion of any kind. . . ." Prendergast said that he must have realized that the naming of Mr. Wilson was the most dangerous selection to his own candidacy that could have been made. Prendergast said that the general impression prevailed that Champ Clark's nomination by the Democrats would have given Roosevelt a good chance to win but, with the recent events it appeared that such an eventuality would not come to pass.²³

In July Cockran wrote to Roosevelt about how to handle economic questions in the campaign. He recommended that the candidate concentrate on the cost of living. Neither of the parties, Cockran pointed out, had spoken "clearly" on this issue, although the made "loud noises" about it. Cockran felt that this would give Roosevelt an unusual opportunity to contrast himself as an "honest man" speaking forthrightly while the others would appear to be cunning and shifty. He cautioned him to avoid the debates on the tariff because nothing new could be added. With regard to trusts, Cockran suggested that

²³ "Reminiscences of William A. Prendergast," III, 416.

Roosevelt state simply some rule, easily interpreted, which held that the essence of the problem had to do with determining the legality or illegality of every enterprise. Earlier Roosevelt had proposed an industrial commission whose function would be akin to the Interstate Commerce Commission. Cockran urged him to emphasize this but to specify that it should be limited to ascertaining the facts about the corporation's status; for example to determine whether it was making an effort to reduce the cost of living or to increase it. After that the question would be settled in the courts.²⁴

The Roosevelt party, known as Progressive or Bull Moose, opened its convention on August 5, 1912. Roosevelt delivered his famous speech "Confession of Faith" a voluminous document of twenty thousand words. It branded old parties as boss ridden, divided on artificial lines and controlled by the privileged few. The Progressive party, on the other hand, would dedicate itself to humane welfare such as social legislation for women and children, workmen's compensation, and women's suffrage. In the area of economics, they would offer farm relief, limited injunctions in labor disputes, currency reform, inheritance and income taxes. In order to be sure that new reform would not be struck down by the courts, the platform advocated the recall of state judicial decisions. Showing some evidence of Cockran's

²⁴Cockran to Roosevelt, July 9, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.

influence Roosevelt said that the American people, not the courts should determine their own policies and ultimately interpret their constitution. To control and regulate "rapacious" interstate industry, he recommended a national industrial commission. To the states it offered an internal improvements program, particularly to enlarge inland waterways. To preserve peace, a limitation of naval armaments also found a place on the Progressive program for the nation.²⁵

With creation of the new party Cockran became a member of the New York Progressive Party. He received the nomination for the first Congressional district in Mineola, Long Island.²⁶ In September, the Progressives of New York State held their Bull Moose convention at Syracuse. As a main speaker Cockran addressed himself to the meaning of the movement. He compared the traditional parties to the conservatives or the old Tories and the progressives to the Whigs. Tories and the present day conservatives concern themselves, he declared, with the preservation of order and the security of property.

²⁵Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 396-397. They met in Chicago. Hiram Johnson, Governor of California was nominated as the Bull Moose Vice-Presidential choice. Roosevelt included direct election of Senators, initiative and referendum, simplification of the amending procedure to enable states to institute needed legislation; a Federal Securities Commission and a monopoly tax as well as a permanent tariff commission. For labor he proposed minimum wages and maximum hours laws, unemployment insurance abolition of child labor, and old age pension; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressives, p. 265-266; Cockran to Roosevelt, July 9, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.

²⁶W. B. McDaniel, (Secretary of the National Progressive Party in this district) to Cockran, August 29, 1912, Cockran MSS. Cockran received the nomination August 26, 1912.

For them the maintenance of liberty and the safety of society depends upon the degrees to which the people could be restrained by the courts and legal formulas, with the foundations set by the constitution. The Progressives, or Whigs, conversely, advocate a Jeffersonian type of popular democracy in which was vested the supreme power of determining what is constitutional when conflicts arise. The American people, Cockran asserted, were not being called upon to resolve abstract political propositions but to redress serious grievances and determine what direction the nation would take in the future. The platform denounced the evils and prescribed measures which would deal effectively with them. The other parties merely ignored the existence of problems and at the same time when recognizing some measure of improvement could be conceivably entertained, they denounced as subversive or revolutionary and proposals of remedies from any sources other than their own.²⁷

The real failure of this society, declared Cockran, lay in the fact that its free institutions did not yield the benefits for which they had been created. The Progressive party, he said, had determined

²⁷Cockran, "Recall of Judicial Decisions," Speech Delivered at the Progressive Party State Convention, September 5, 1912, Cockran MSS.; Cockran explained that the injury of an individual in the process of production under the present system left the victim to his own devices while an employer accepted his responsibility to repair a machine when it broke down. In such a case he merely checked it off to the cost of production. Cockran argued that since human labor is part of the cost of production workmen's liability (compensation) should also be considered as part of the cost of production.

to establish justice for all whatever the cost, whether through the courts if possible, or against them if necessary. He defended the recall of judicial decisions in that it sought not to take the power from the courts to question legislation but rather proposed that a judicial ruling condemning a statute should not be sufficient to nullify it unless the decision were sanctioned formally by the majority of the people.²⁸

The Syracuse convention also presented a candidate for the gubernatorial office in the State. Oscar Straus, former Secretary of Commerce under Roosevelt, appeared to be the favorite. He says in his autobiography that during the first day lively discussion prevailed

²⁸ Cockran, "Recall of Judicial Decisions." Cockran attacked the court for declaring the Ives Law unconstitutional. The Ives Law had been passed in 1907 and declared null and void by the New York State Court because it provided for employers' liability benefits, which they maintained violated the due process clause of the constitution. Cockran said that the Ives Law actually tried to put into effect the idea that the employer should include laborer's injuries as part of the cost of production. Nowhere in the law was the employer to have to spend anything over \$2000 and that would be only in case of death or permanent injury. The Bull Moose state platform was similar to the national one. They added a provision for an improved housing law and state control of water power; See Al Smith, Up to Now, p. 90-91. Employer's liability became an important question in New York because of the Triangle Waist Company fire which occurred in 1911. Although one of the important questions dealt with fire regulations, a more significant one pertained to workmen's compensation.

over the selections of this place on the ticket. Committees urged him to allow them to present his name but he declined. He said that he had neither the training nor the temperament to hold elective office. Straus wrote that he accepted the chairmanship of this convention as a means to preclude his nomination. Despite his wishes, on September 6, after a deadlock over nominees Walker H. Hotchkiss and William A. Prendergast withdrew and Straus became the Progressive Party's gubernatorial candidate. Roosevelt, who was not present because he had begun to tour the country, sent word to Straus of his support.²⁹ Straus emerged as a popular candidate among the Progressives. Arthur Brisbane of the New York Evening Journal, wrote his approval of Straus when he declared him to be a citizen of the highest character and service to this country who well deserved the nomination. Hearst declared that the Progressive's choice made the independent movement in the United States a real and powerful force.³⁰ Even the New York State Republicans offered Straus the same place on their ticket. Hotchkiss, organizer of the Progressives in the state and Chairman of the Progressive National Committee, advised him to reject the offer lest the public confuse the aims and goals of the new organization. Cockran, too, rejoiced in this nomination.³¹ The Democrats

²⁹ Oscar Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 314-318.

³⁰ Arthur Brisbane, ed., Evening Journal (New York) September 10, 1912, Cockran MSS; Brisbane to Cockran, September 14, 1912, Ibid.

³¹ Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 319-320.

presented a formidable candidate in William L. Sulzer, former chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives.³²

Many independent Democrats other than Cockran had joined the Progressives as Democratic progressives. Unfortunately, most people remained confused about the aims and goals of the party. Bernard Block, a New York lawyer and independent Democrat, who had become disenchanted with the Democratic Party wrote to Roosevelt about this. Roosevelt referred him to Cockran. Block told Cockran that the mass of people lacked faith in the sincerity of the New York Progressives. They reasoned, said Block, that the immediate cause of the new movement lay in the split among Republican ranks which had resulted from the bitterness of the Chicago convention. Block said that the Progressives must emphasize their own unique identity and lack of any affiliation with Republicans. He suggested that independent Democrats disabuse the public mind of any erroneous connections.³³ Cockran answered that to a large extent independent Republicans had created the confusion by dwelling unduly on the split with the Old Guard. He had tried but did not succeed in his appeal to them to emphasize the Progressive platform when they campaigned.

³² Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 319-320.

³³ Bernard Block to Cockran, September 14, 1912, Cockran MSS.

Cockran worked also with Ernest Harvier the leader of New York independent Democrats, in attempting to form fusions with the Progressives. They both agreed that they had their job cut out for them in educating people that the new force in the state's politics had no connections with the Republican organization.³⁴ Cockran tried on every possible occasion to clarify the differences between Republicans, Democrats and Progressives. In October he defined the true democrats as Progressives and as healthy men who cherished the people and their ability to govern themselves well.³⁵ From Massachusetts James P. Magenis, a lawyer and active in the progressive movement beseeched Cockran to come to Boston educate the city's voters about the new cause.³⁶

On the whole, the campaign on the national scale centered on Roosevelt and Wilson. Roosevelt toured and spoke with his typical vigor

³⁴ Cockran to Block, October 2, 1912, Cockran MSS. Albert Bartle to Cockran October 15, 1912, Ibid., Bartle asked Cockran to explain to the people what the Progressive party stood for in his district; Cockran to James Morrissey, October 11, 1912, Cockran MSS. Lucien Bonheur ran Cockran's campaign. Bonheur served as chairman of the National Progressive party in Nassau County, Mineola, Long Island

³⁵ Baltimore American, October 8, 1912, Ibid., Albert Bartle to Cockran, October 15, 1912, Ibid. Bartle asked Cockran to inform the people of the district of his plans if victorious with regard to the inland water way through the Great South Bay of Long Island. His predecessor in Congress, Townsend Scudder, did a great deal to encourage the much needed canal. Others who followed did nothing. The people hoped that Cockran would do something.

³⁶ James P. Magenis to Cockran October 19, 1912, Ibid.

and energy. Roosevelt espoused the essential points of his New Nationalism and Wilson attacked him for promoting the idea of a master state without limits in power to control the economic life of the nation.³⁷

In Roosevelt's final appeal for votes he echoed Cockran's admonition that the Progressives would do everything in their power to preserve liberty for the oppressed and downtrodden. His last words were, "We recognize in neither court, nor Congress, nor President, any divine right to override the will of the people."³⁸

The State campaign, Straus wrote, was conducted with dignity. Vilification and general mud slinging between the candidates remained absent. Straus billed himself as an "unbossed" candidate of the "unbossed people."³⁹

Despite the enthusiasm and the great effort extended by all the managers and candidates, Woodrow Wilson emerged the victory, carrying with him a large Democratic majority. Cockran lost his bid for the Congressional seat but he registered little surprise. He had

³⁷ Mowry, Roosevelt and Progressives, 276-277; Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 322-323. On October 14, 1912, on the final round of Roosevelt's tour through the Midwest, a man shot him as he left his hotel to deliver a speech at a Milwaukee auditorium. Notwithstanding the wound in his chest he delivered a speech which lasted an hour. Afterward, however, he returned home to New York and ceased activities until the last rally at Madison Square Garden.

³⁸ Mowry, Roosevelt and Progressives, p. 278.

³⁹ Straus, Under Four Administrations, pp. 320-321.

never shared in any optimism about the chances of the Progressives in this election. He believed that a strong Democratic candidate, such as Wilson, would win because of the split among the Republicans and the inability of the Progressives to draw from Democratic strength.⁴⁰ Cockran maintained that measures which Roosevelt and the Progressives championed could hardly have been enacted into law without the backing of a disciplined, cohesive political party. The Progressives had little rapport with each other, lacking the necessary common purpose to overcome the weaknesses of a hastily formed organization.⁴¹ Despite these

⁴⁰ Cockran to John T. Murphy, November 17, 1912, Letterbook #22, p. 222, Cockran MSS. See letters to Moreton Frewen, Ibid.; Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, p. 400; Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York State," pp. 427-428; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressives, p. 281. Roosevelt received 4,126,000 votes, Wilson, 6,286,124 and Taft 3,483,922 popular votes. In New York State received 393,283 votes while Roosevelt got 389,000. The Progressives ran third in the State. Wilson polled 655,573 and Taft 455,487 votes. Sulzer won with 649,559 against Job Hedges, the Republican's 44,105. One Progressive Congressman went to Washington and one party candidate went to the State Senate in addition to four assemblymen. The votes reflected urban support and most of them from New York City. Progressives ran ahead of Republicans except up-state, and in Chautauqua they overcame the Democrats; Al Smith Up to Now, pp. 123-124. Sulzer won with a landslide. Senate and Assembly became overwhelmingly Democratic. In the Assembly out of 150 members 125 were Democrats with Smith as speaker; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1924), p. 8049. Although Cockran lost he polled a few hundred more votes than the Republican candidate; United States Congress, Biographical Dictionary of American Congress (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), p. 829. House Document #783 of the 69th Cong., 2nd Sess. Cockran ran as an unsuccessful candidate for Congress in the election of 1912 in Long Island reports the document but no figures on the votes polled appears.

faults, Cockran told Ernest Harvier, leader of the Democratic Progressives that the party remained the only force offering definite proposals to alleviate social and economic ills of the nation. Moreover, Cockran maintained, no one but Roosevelt could inspire the full confidence of the American people. With the campaign behind him the former President could devote himself to the practical details of building a strong organization.⁴²

Notwithstanding Cockran's first hand experience and correct analysis, he did not go far enough in explaining the failure of the Progressives. They failed to make significant inroads into Democratic strongholds during the campaign. Many people confused Progressives with Republicans because of what superficially appeared to be similar positions on trusts and the tariff. Although Cockran advocated free trade, most of the Progressives would not accept reciprocity. Roosevelt's Columbus Day speech alienated potential supporters among the Republicans.⁴³

⁴² Cockran to Harvier, November 8, 1912, p.237., Cockran MSS.

⁴³ Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 150; Rosenthal, "The Progressive Movement in New York," p. 426; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 217-218, 281. Bowers, Beveridge, pp. 439-440. Strong sentiment developed in the party against George Perkins, chairman of the executive committee. He was a spokesman of the more conservative elements of the party and took objection to anti-trust regulations. This was attributed to the fact that he was a member of the House of Morgan. Gifford Pinchot and William Allen White as well as Hiram Johnson believed that Perkins should resign. Roosevelt refused to support the anti-Perkins faction.

Cockran remained in the Progressive party and became a member of the Nassau County finance committee in November, 1912.⁴⁴ Leaders of the party intended to keep the organization a functioning operation with their eyes focused on the 1916 Presidential campaign. They opened headquarters both in Washington and New York with Walter F. Brown of Ohio in charge of the New York wing.⁴⁵

Despite the great hopes for the future, very little real promise could be held for the Progressive Party. As early as January 1913, Cockran reminded Harvier that unless the organization could draw membership from both the old parties its survival would be impossible. Cockran cherished the dream that a great body of independent Democrats would join.⁴⁶ As events developed the opposite occurred. By the summer Bull Moosers could count on only 32,000 voters in all fifty New York counties.⁴⁷ Fearing that many members would return to the old Republican party, in February Roosevelt wrote to Cockran

⁴⁴Bonheur to Cockran, November 15, 1912, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Roosevelt, November 20, 1912, Letterbook #V. 93, p. 46, Roosevelt MSS.; Cockran to Roosevelt, November 21, 1912, Ibid.

⁴⁵New York Times, January 25, 1913, p. 4.

⁴⁶Ibid., January 27, 1913, p. 2; Cockran to Harvier, January 25, 1913, Letterbook #21, p. 424, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁷New York Times, April 14, 1913, p. 11, July 13, 1913, p. 4.

that the Old Guard and some Progressives outside of New York were plotting to destroy the movement. Michigan Republicans, for instance, in order to attract voters, had annexed the whole of the Progressive plank. Roosevelt therefore wanted Cockran to go to the General Progressive Congress to be held on March 13, 1913 to discredit those efforts and members, including La Follette, who appeared to be among the promulgators in this conspiracy.⁴⁸ During the month of March Roosevelt once again beseeched Cockran's aid, this time for Massachusetts. A congressional contest would take place in which the Progressive candidate Norman H. White of Brookline would be contending for the Senatorial seat vacated by Senator Weeks. Roosevelt believed that White had a good chance of coming in second and a "fair chance" of winning. In a number of the big cities in the district there was a large Irish Democratic vote and if the Progressives could split this vote, White might be the victor. Roosevelt said that no one could be as effective in this work as Cockran. Therefore, he asked him to go and make a few speeches for White. Cockran consented. Two events were planned for him. He spoke at Framingham and at Waltham.⁴⁹

The State of New York offered several challenges to the New York Progressives in 1913. The contest over the direct primary law

⁴⁸Roosevelt to Cockran, February 27, 1913, Letterbook V. 95, p. 378. Roosevelt MSS. There is no evidence in the records to indicate that Cockran went.

⁴⁹Roosevelt to Cockran, March 19, 1913, Letterbook V. 95, Part II, p. 586, Roosevelt MSS.; Roosevelt to Cockran March 25, 1913,

and the New York City Mayoral election would be tests for the reformers. If a primary law could be passed Progressives might be able to compete with the established parties. Governor William L. Sulzer, the Democratic Governor, recommended a measure that would abolish the convention system and would put state officers under the primary system. Progressives supported Sulzer's idea but Republicans and Tammany opposed it. The state legislature in large part controlled by Tammany rejected the governor's measure overwhelmingly. In order to gain support Sulzer opened an intensive campaign for its adoption by stumping the state. Originally a Tammany choice, Sulzer had become embroiled in a political struggle with Murphy over patronage. These differences enhanced the determination of the Governor that the State enact his primary law. He assailed the legislature which had failed to support him, as well as Murphy. Seeking support Sulzer had visited Democratic strongholds of the State and intended to devote the remainder of his time before June making rounds of the Republican districts. Republicans, however, would not

p. 647, Ibid., Cockran to Roosevelt, April 1, 1913, Ibid. Cockran said to Roosevelt that he was doing this for his default in Michigan; New York Times, March 24, 1913, p. 5. New Yorkers were also supposed to vote on a bill providing for a constitutional convention to be held on April 14, 1914. Tammany supported the bill and if the voters agreed to the convention Tammany was assured of the election of their own delegates to that assembly. This would have far reaching effects both on the coming municipal election and the types of provisions in the amended or new constitution.

respond to him because their party platform favored the convention system. Sulzer also made public a letter from Cockran in which the former New York Congressman declared himself behind the Governor. He said that it was the true expression of popular sovereignty to institute primaries. The real contest maintained Cockran, was between the people and the bosses.⁵⁰ In June Cockran went to Albany, when the special session of the legislature was called, to help rally support for the direct primary cause.⁵¹ He told the legislators that the theory of the convention practice was that it constituted a representative body composed of men who would act independently. No such body had actually sat in New York State for many years. The boss, said Cockran, surrounded by his "satraps," whom he only consulted when it suited him, named all the candidates prior to the convention. All that was left for it to do was merely to ratify the wishes of the boss. The essence of the primary fight was that those who supported it believed power should be exercised by all the people. The desire to preserve the old method meant the perpetuation of bossism and back-room nominations. Everyone familiar with politics in New York City, said

⁵⁰ New York Times, June 1, 1913, p. 8.

⁵¹ Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York," p. 347. When the legislature rejected his measure the Governor summoned them back into special session in June and rallied advocates to his cause. Roosevelt numbered among Sulzer's supporters; Paul M. Angel, Crossroads, 1913 (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), p. 187. Sulzer vetoed two bills retaining the convention system; Cockran, Speech Before the Albany Legislature on the Direct Primary, June 17, 1913, Cockran MSS.

Cockran, knew that nominees were decided on in a private room at Delmonicos or anywhere the boss decided to "honor" with his favors. Reform would alter this practice. Whenever states used the primary method, success resulted by giving the people better candidates for office. Honest defenders of the convention procedure did so under a delusion that a select few could perform as fair and disinterested custodians of power, declared Cockran.⁵²

Despite the persuasive arguments for electoral reform, the Democratic machine rallied all of its resources and defeated Sulzer's bill. To further discredit him the legislators decided to investigate Sulzer's conduct both before and after his election. On August 13, 1913 a joint committee, dominated by Tammany representatives, presented articles of impeachment to the lower house of the State legislature.⁵³ Unfortunately, they had uncovered damaging evidence which led to Sulzer's impeachment. He had failed to report large sums of campaign contributions which he had diverted to personal use. The State Senate tried him, found him guilty of perjury and removed him from office

⁵²Cockran, Speech before the Albany Legislature on Direct Primaries, June 18, 1913, Cockran MSS.

⁵³Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York," p. 437; Angel, Crossroads, p. 188.

in October.⁵⁴ This did not have the effect that the Democrats had hoped. At the Bull Moose convention held in New York in September the Progressives defended Sulzer as the people's friend. Speakers, including Roosevelt assailed Murphy and Tammany.⁵⁵ In October, after his return from Europe, Cockran speaking at a large fusion meeting held at Cooper Union, defended Sulzer and declared that Murphy who had once been a leader had sold himself to the "rich seekers after privilege" and had degenerated into a boss. Cockran defended his own former connection with Murphy on the ground that it existed before the latter had assumed the dictatorial position which he presently held. Cockran concluded by warning his audience that the impeachment would have dire consequences because it meant that political and business thieves would continue to be protected.⁵⁶

The New York City mayoral contest would also be decisive in the fortunes of the Progressives. As early as April Henry Stoddard of The Evening Mail wrote to Roosevelt that the party should avoid nominating a Hearst supported candidate, particularly John Purroy Mitchell, for the top office. Stoddard reminded Roosevelt that every

⁵⁴ Rosenthal, "Progressive Movement in New York," p. 437; Smith, Up to Now, p. 130. The session of 1913 turned out to be the longest and stormiest in the history of that body; Ellis, Syrett, Carmen, A Short History of New York State. In 1913, the legislature enacted all the recommendations which the Factory Investigating Commission (set up after the Triangle Fire) had recommended which had not been enacted before. Among the most important labor laws passed was the Workmen's Compensation Act; Al Smith, Up to Now, pp. 122, 132. Martin H. Glynn, Lieutenant Governor, succeeded Sulzer.

⁵⁵ New York Times, September 28, 1913, Section III, pp. 1, 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., October 26, 1913, p. 4.

political leader or movement in the city or State that had relied on Hearst as an ally had been tricked by him.⁵⁷ In July, Cockran told Frewen that the contest was at "sixes and sevens." Cockran said that Mitchell, former collector of the New York Port "loomed strong in the background as a potential dark horse." Cockran expected to see someone nominated who had not yet entered into the discussions. He said that this would be necessary because of the present political chaos in the city. Such circumstances almost always resulted in the emergence of somebody whom no one considered all along, but whose appearance suddenly stilled discussion and united discordant elements, he said. He thought that Mitchell might be that man.⁵⁸ Strangely enough it turned out that Mitchell's name would cause the very disruption that Cockran imagined it might prevent.

Cockran did not actively participate in the 1913 mayoral election. He left for England during the summer and the only contact he had with New York politics came through his correspondence with Ernest Harvier and John B. Johnston. He learned that Progressives

⁵⁷ Henry Stoddard, ed., The Evening Mail (New York) to Roosevelt, April 21, 1913, Roosevelt MSS.

⁵⁸ Cockran to Frewen, July 10, 1913, Cockran MSS. Events in New York had overshadowed the debates in Congress on the Underwood Tariff. Cockran said that he had been following the proceedings with the same interest he had in the past; Cockran to Underwood, July 13, 1913, Ibid. Cockran favored most of the proposals of the Underwood Tariff, but he objected to the provisions which retained high duties on imported art. He said that they had been proposed by "barbarians."

had formed in a fusion effort with the Independence League and a number of more conservative citizens who could no longer tolerate Tammany control of the city.⁵⁹ Mayor Gaynor, not willing to take dictation from Murphy, lost the bosses support and decided to run as an independent. Tammany nominated Edward McCall, Chairman of the Public Service Commission in his place.⁶⁰ With Gaynor in the running Mitchel became the underdog. Gaynor, however, died suddenly and Mitchel's position improved so much that he became the favorite and the fusion candidate for New York City's mayor.⁶¹ An internal struggle developed between the Progressives over candidates for the office of comptroller and Board of Alderman but by the time Cockran returned in October those differences had been resolved and all Cockran had to do was to perform his oratorical duty and to call for the removal of Murphy and Tammany from control of the city.⁶²

⁵⁹ Harvier to Cockran, July 28, 1913, Cockran MSS.; John B. Johnston to Cockran, August 29, 1913, Letterbook #22, pp. 347-348, Ibid.

⁶⁰ Johnston to Cockran, September 4, 1913, p. 351, Ibid., Garrett, LaGuardia, p. 43.

⁶¹ Garrett, LaGuardia, p. 43; Johnston to Cockran September 12, 1913, Letterbook #22, pp. 359-360, Cockran MSS.

⁶² Johnston to Cockran, September 17, 1913, Letterbook #22, p. 364, Cockran MSS.; Garret, La Guardia, p. 43; New York Times, October 26, 1913, p. 4. September 28, 1913, Section III, pp. 1, 3. The Progressives held their Bull Moose Convention in September at Rochester. They reaffirmed the 1912 platform and called for the ouster of Murphy. They recommended Learned Hand for Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and Samuel Seabury as Associate Judge. Sulzer received the nomination for the 6th Assembly district on the Progressive ticket.

Harvier wrote to Cockran that he had never before seen so many blunders on the Tammany side. The one thing which they should have avoided, he said, was the nomination of Edward McCall. He predicted that McCall would be trounced by Mitchel. Harvier, said, "and it may be of interest to you to know that the organization of independent Democrats, of which I am a member, is supporting Mr. Mitchel . . . " ⁶³

Harvier's predictions came true. With the overwhelming support of fusionists, independents and anti-Tammany conservative businessmen, John Purroy Mitchel won a tremendous victory in November, bringing with him fusion control not only of the Mayor's office but of the Board of Estimate and the Board of Aldermen. Although Republicans regained their majority of the assembly, seventeen Progressives, including former Governor Sulzer, increased the representation of the Progressive party in that body to forty four. On the bench, Chief Justice William Werner, who had handed down the decision in the Ives case, holding the Employer's Liability Law unconstitutional had to give up his seat to Willard Bartlett. ⁶⁴

⁶³ Harvier to Cockran, October 30, 1913, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁴ Rosenthal, "The Progressive Movement in New York," p. 438.

Despite these successes, the Progressive party enrollment had declined to less than ten percent of that of the 1912 list. Moreover, the leadership of the party had split over the chairmanship of George Perkins. A number of otherwise loyal supporters of Roosevelt returned to the Republican party.⁶⁵ Cockran remained loyal nevertheless, at least for the time being. He had not expressed any opinion about Perkins, particularly because he was not directly involved in the party organization.

At best Cockran's service to the Progressive had to do with his ability to sway the public in favor of their candidates or platform. In January 1914, for example, he delivered an address, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music calling for the extension of the franchise of women. For nearly seventy five years women had been agitating for this right but in the past five they had become more militant. A number of bills had been placed before the New York State legislature calling for an amendment to the state constitution which would guarantee the vote to women. It met with defeat. Cockran decried the arguments in favor of keeping women from the political activities. He maintained that excluding women from the vote no longer had any valid basis, if it had in the past. Indeed, Cockran believed that in view of the uncertainties which had accompanied the twentieth century, women's influence in political affairs

⁶⁵ Rosenthal, "The Progressive Movement in New York," p. 438; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 291.

would tend to moderate men's aggressiveness. Since women instinctively oppose bloodshed and violence, said Cockran, their participation would tend to inhibit the male from making potentially dangerous decisions. The female's productive role in the economic growth of the nation earned her a concomitant responsibility in the political developments as well. The extension of the franchise to women could only be for the good, declared Cockran, since their performance in other pursuits had been among the healthiest symptoms of modern progress.⁶⁶ Although Cockran's sentiments were shared by many reformers, New York State did not grant women the right to vote until 1917.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Cockran, Speech on Women's Suffrage at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, January 12, 1914, Cockran MSS. Cockran did not have the same attitude about extending suffrage to Negroes in the South. In a speech delivered in Montgomery, Alabama on May 10, 1900 he argued that not until the black man showed economic independence should he have the right to vote. Cockran advocated removing the 15th amendment from the United States Constitution. He considered that provision a violation of states' rights. See Speech Delivered by the Honorable W. Bourke Cockran Before the First Annual Conference on the Race Problems of the South (Montgomery, Alabama) in Proceedings of the First Annual Conference on Race Problems of the South (Richmond, Virginia, 1900), pp.194-218, Ibid.

⁶⁷ Smith, Up to Now, p. 162. Women voted in New York for the first time in 1918.

By mid-1914 the Progressive party in New York State became weaker. It seemed to many that a more conservative leadership had taken over. Roosevelt showed decreasing interest, both in selecting candidate for approaching elections in the issues promulgated in the New Nationalism. Harvier wrote to Cockran in July to remind Roosevelt that unless a general policy were soon agreed to and effective action taken on proposing candidates for September conventions that all effective activity would have to be suspended. He pointed out to Cockran that to develop any candidate or ticket for state offices selection must not be made later than September 8th.⁶⁸

Roosevelt finally proposed Harvey Hinman, a former supporter of Charles Evans Hughes, as the Progressive nominee for the position of Governor. The party leader had hoped for an amalgamation with former State Republican Progressives to strengthen Progressive chances in November. Independent Democrats objected and interpreted this as a Roosevelt sell-out. They feared that if Hinman won in the Republican primaries a large number of Progressives would go back to the Republican party leaving the remainder of radicals, and independents with nothing else but to desert the new party and seek another candidate elsewhere. Should Hinman fail in the Republican primaries but run successfully in those of the Progressive party, he could not, under the new primary law,

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Harvier to Cockran, July 3, 1914, Cockran MSS.; Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 301-303.

decline from running as a Progressive. He would then enjoy very little of their support. Harvier told Cockran that Hinman did not fill the requirements of the party nor the wishes of its more liberal members.⁶⁹ Harvier complained that the party was being diminished by deserters, because it had become a Hughes and not a Roosevelt organization. By September most of the Democrats had either withdrawn or had been forced out of the organization. Harvier claimed that while it was true that the Progressive party in the state had become a Hughes party the new Supreme Court Judge, Hughes, himself, was an "out and out Republican and prospective candidate for the Republican nomination for the Presidency two years hence."⁷⁰ Hinman, however, stepped out and Roosevelt's attempt to secure fusion for the gubernatorial nomination failed.⁷¹ The Progressives nominated William Sulzer as their gubernatorial candidate. Because of the lack of unanimity before the primaries Hamilton Fish, Jr. had written to Cockran, asking for his help in bringing greater support to Sulzer. Fish contended that if Sulzer could secure the Progressive nomination he could win in the state. He asked Cockran to speak with Sulzer in New York City during the last few days before the primary election on September 28. Fish said that the largest proportion of Progressives resided in the

⁶⁹ Harvier to Cockran, July 28, 1914, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁰ Ibid., September 23, 1914, Ibid.

⁷¹ Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 301.

Greater New York area and with the many anti-Tammany elements both in the Democratic and Republican parties in his own Putnam County, Sulzer could easily receive the Progressive nomination and "win hands down." He said that the sentiment for Sulzer "is extraordinary among the Democrats and Republicans. The Democratic County Committee in Putnam County is solid for him on any ticket. . . ." ⁷²

Harvier, too, believed in a Sulzer victory. He believed that Martin Glynn, the Democratic nominee, who had filled out Sulzer's term would gain support only in New York City but Sulzer would be the victor outside, drawing a substantial vote from all anti-Tammanytes. ⁷³ Some of the reasons for Harvier's optimism were the developments which were taking place in the Democratic clubs throughout the State. As early as February the Democratic Club had repudiated Murphy with a resolution calling upon him to resign. Later during the same month, Woodrow Wilson pledged himself to aid in the efforts to oust Murphy. He joined acting Governor Glynn in a plan to reorganize the Democratic party in New York State under the auspices of the national administration. William C. Osborne became chairman of the State committee. ⁷⁴ Therefore, with the repudiation of the Tammany Democrats by the

⁷²Hamilton, Fish, Jr. to Cockran, September 12, 1914, Cockran MSS.

⁷³Harvier to Cockran, October 23, 1914, Ibid.

⁷⁴New York Times, January 20, 1914, p. 2, February 3, 1914, p. 1, February 10, 1914, p. 1.

President of the United States, and despite the Democratic nominee for Governor Glynn's apparent intentions to cooperate with Wilson, the Democrats had been discredited.

The Democratic progressives reasoned that their own candidate had more than an even chance of victory. They had miscalculated. While it was true that the people of the State defeated the Democratic machine they also rejected the new party. Republican Charles S. Whitman came into office with a full Republican ticket. The Old Guard regained control of the State. Alfred E. Smith said that the people had been "discontented and full of ill feeling caused by the impeachment of the Governor." The Republicans had capitalized on this.⁷⁵ The Progressives met with a devastating defeat not only in New York but throughout the nation. Only one progressive was left in the House of Representatives. The total Democratic and Republican vote cast throughout the country had exceeded six million, while the Progressive total had fallen below two million.⁷⁶

While many Progressives lost faith in Roosevelt and the ability of the party to sustain itself, Cockran refused to accept the decline of Roosevelt as a leader in American life. Despite the report in the Boston Herald that Cockran, among thousands, had left the Progressive party in October 1914, he had continued to correspond

⁷⁵ Smith, Up to Now, pp. 132-133.

⁷⁶ Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 303.

with the former President about how the latter remained the only hope for this nation. In 1915, Cockran decried the revitalization of "reactionary Republican(ism)," a dying Progressive party and a weakened Democratic party. He told Roosevelt that "there is one other force in the political life of the country, and that force is yourself." Still pursuing the will-o-the-wisp, he continued, "if all progressive elements in both old parties--the progressive Democrats who are an overwhelming majority and the progressive Republicans, who are a substantial minority--could be united, they would easily carry the country." He said that he could not conceive of any other power in the United States to rally the nation behind it other than a Roosevelt candidacy in 1916. He had no confidence in the Democratic party or the President. While he admitted that they might be "animated by the very loftiest desires," they were "afflicted with a leadership so inept that the prospects of even a meritorious measure are not advanced but positively endangered when it is supported by this administration." Roosevelt therefore had to be the only alternative, believed Cockran. Nevertheless, he realized that this thought amounted to nothing more than a forlorn hope. He ended his letter to Roosevelt with "I prefer to cherish any prospect, however remote, to escape from such a calamity than submit tamely to return of the Reactionary, even though that should prove to be

inevitable."⁷⁷

Notwithstanding these sentiments, because of the effects of World War I on the United States, Cockran would support Woodrow Wilson for the Presidency in 1916 and eventually return to the Democratic party in 1920.

⁷⁷Cockran to Roosevelt, February 6, 1915, Roosevelt MSS.; Boston Herald, October 27, 1914, Cockran MSS.

CHAPTER IX

WORLD WAR I - WOODROW WILSON - PEACE

The admiration of Bourke Cockran for Theodore Roosevelt did not preclude a divergence in views from the former President concerning national policies during World War I. Where Roosevelt criticized as weak Wilson's policy of neutrality and mediation, Cockran considered the restraint of the President and his untiring efforts to promote peace as evidence of strength.¹ Despite the sympathies of hyphenated citizens, Americans, traditionally isolationist, did not wish to participate in the European struggle, at least at the outset. Wilson, a leading non-interventionist, repeatedly insisted that the causes of and objectives of the war remained complex and that both sides shared the guilt.² Cockran proclaimed his loyalty to Wilson and declared that even though some did not approve of the President's policies, as a

¹Cockran, Speech Delivered at Prospect Hall, Brooklyn, October 28, 1914, Cockran MSS.

²Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, 1914-1915 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 8-13, 17-29, 53.

patriotic duty Americans should support their Chief Executive.³

Long an anti-imperialist and pacifist, Cockran's attitude is understandable. During the first decade of the twentieth century, anti-expansionists, Cockran among them, placed great emphasis on peace movements. He had envisioned the United States as a world moral force which would enlighten leaders of other nations as to rewards of a rational rather than a militant approach to the solution of international problems.⁴ In his 1906 correspondence with William T. Stead, the British editor of Review of Reviews, Cockran said that he fervently hoped and expected that before the close of the twentieth century a "mercenary soldier will be considered as incongruous with civilization as a cannibal is to-day."⁵ The two international peace conferences at the Hague in 1899 and in 1907, the increasing numbers concerned with world disarmament, as well as a growing interest in some form of international organization for peace, demonstrates that pacifists had tried to develop practical methods and institutions in promoting their objectives. In the United States,

³ Cockran, Speech at Prospect Hall, October 28, 1914, Cockran MSS.

⁴ Ibid., Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 94-95; Naomi Cohen, A Dual Heritage: The Public Career of Oscar S. Straus (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), p. 104.

⁵ Cockran to William T. Stead, June 5, 1906, Cockran MSS.

the rehabilitated New York Peace Society pledged itself to encourage arbitration among nations and to cooperate with similarly conceived societies elsewhere in the world. The creation of the National Peace Society in 1907, and five subsequent national peace conferences between 1907 and 1915 testify to the vigor of the American peace movement.⁶

In 1909, Cockran joined the New York Peace Society, although he did not fully support its program. He told William H. Short, the executive secretary, that although he favored the general aims, he did not believe a proposal for an international high court of justice, devoted to "forensic debates" and "judicial decree," would be an effective instrument in outlawing armaments. Since courts operate to preserve conditions, not to change them, and nobody could pretend that maintaining an armed force violated the vague rules of international law, Cockran saw no reason why such a court would rule against a nation arming itself.⁷

⁶ William T. Stead of Review of Reviews, London, to Cockran, May 23, 1906, Cockran MSS. Stead enclosed a memorandum which stated that British pacifists had proposed an annual peace budget to provide funds to promote a "universal entente cordiale" between nations. They proposed to submit to the forthcoming Hague conference a recommendation that all power adopt this principle as the most effective and simplest method of allaying international animosities; Robert Osgood, Ideals, p. 95; Daniel M. Smith, The Great Departure: The United States and World War I, 1914-1920 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 1.

⁷ Cockran to William H. Short, December 3, 1909, Letterbook #17, pp. 243-244, Short to Cockran, March 29, 1910, July 1, 1910, Cockran MSS. The peace society also wanted to refer disputes to the Hague

As vice-president of the International Peace Forum, Cockran told an audience in November 1911 at the Metropolitan Temple in New York City that those who advocated a policy of increased armaments as a deterrent to war were misguided. Indeed excessive weaponry not only guaranteed war but robbed future generations of their rightful heritage to a productive life, maintained Cockran.⁸

With the threat of impending world war, President Woodrow Wilson tried to exploit American neutrality as a basis for mediating the impending conflict. In the months preceding (May through July 1914) he sent Colonel Edward House, who shared his views, to Europe in an unsuccessful attempt to accomplish this.⁹ When the conflict began on August 4, 1914, Wilson envisioned the United States role as a model of democracy and the defender of moral principles. Between August 4th and November 6th ten official proclamations were issued which clarified the neutrality of the country.

Tribunal. They denied the validity of the right of conquest. They proposed an International Court of Arbitration and world federation. Andrew Carnegie was president. Other executives were Lyman Abbott, Charles E. Hughes, John Bassett Moore, Alton Parker, George Peabody, and Elihu Root.

⁸ Cockran, Excerpts of a Speech from a clipping in the New York Press, November 20, 1911, also in the World, Cockran MSS. John W. Mill was president of the International Peace Forum.

⁹ Charles Seymour, ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel Edward House, (4 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1926), I, 247-276. These pages are a description of the total effort.

During the early months of the war Wilson appealed to Americans to be neutral in thought and deed. For the President this meant keeping apart from the difficulties, thus allowing him to act as a mediator between the belligerents.¹⁰

At first Cockran was skeptical of Wilson's role. To those who applauded the President, Cockran said that such interventions would invite distrust and seriously impair the influence of this country. Cockran feared that the belligerents would interpret Wilson's use of his good offices as selfish; as a means to bolster the country's lagging economy.¹¹

When a quick settlement seemed impossible some Americans began to urge the administration to become prepared for possible involvement by building up the American arsenal and fighting forces. They feared the results of neutrality would militate against the United States. Over the previous decade America had dropped to a third ranking naval power and had a very weak army. Theodore Roosevelt, Augustus P. Gardner, Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, General Leonard Wood, Chief of the general staff, and Secretary of War Lindley Garrison led those who wished to see this country emerge as a military power. Although at first Roosevelt supported

¹⁰Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, pp. 57-62, 65-66.

¹¹Cockran, Speech at Prospect Hall (Brooklyn) October 28, 1914, Cockran MSS.; Seymour, ed., Intimate Papers, I, 309-311, 343-344, 303-306. Throughout the autumn, House had conferences with the English concerning neutral rights.

Wilson's policy he soon changed his position and accused Wilson of acquiescing in the German invasion of Belgium.¹² The preparedness debate did not reach a peak until 1915 but from the beginning Cockran assailed rearmament. He warned that it would have an adverse effect on the American economy by withdrawing the most able bodied men from the means of production. He disputed the proposition that a defensive force could not protect this nation in case of attack. He interpreted the demand for preparedness as based on the assumption that this country could no longer depend for its security upon its distance from Europe. Cockran lamented the loss of faith in the potentialities of international negotiations and reason.¹³

¹²Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy of the United States, 1913-1945, Trans., Nancy Lyman Roelker (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 10, 57. When the war broke out, the United States' regular army comprised 75,000 men and a militia of 120,000. In case of conflict the Government thought it could raise an army of 460,000 men plus 43,000 for coastal defense.

¹³Cockran, Speech Delivered at a Meeting Held by the Knights of Columbus in New York City, December 25, 1914, Cockran MSS.; Cockran, Speech on Preparedness, February 22, 1914?, Ibid.; Martin Keogh to Cockran, December 1, 1914, Ibid., Keogh told Cockran that a speech he had delivered on the subject excited community debate. He told him that ever since he made known his position on America's relations to the war, he had been overwhelmed with requests to get Cockran to speak on the same subject at the New Rochelle Forum; William Waring Tinsley, "The American Preparedness Movement, 1913-1916" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, September 1939), pp. 45-47, 50, 60. Toward the close of 1914 public opinion was confused over a prudent policy in regard to national defenses. By the end of December 1914 protests against preparedness movement by peace societies increased. They sent resolutions to Congress to resist increased armaments demands.

Despite Cockran's argument the fear of weakness had much validity. The British and Germans had set up blockades of each others ports. The United States Department of State protested to both nations and particularly to Germany because of her use of submarines. As had been anticipated, the insistence of the United States on freedom of the seas, including the right of Americans to travel abroad, resulted in loss of lives. The issue reached a climax when a German U-boat torpedoed a British ocean liner, the *Lusitania*, off the Irish coast, on May 7, 1915. One hundred twenty eight Americans died. The demand for immediate action and reprisal spread quickly throughout the eastern part of the United States. Wilson lodged a protest demanding assurances against the repetition of such attacks. Theodore Roosevelt and his many followers called for stronger response than Presidential notes.¹⁴

Cockran, on the other hand, applauded Wilson's moderation. At a mass meeting at the Chicago Coliseum called by the Knights of Columbus in response to the Pope's appeal for peace in November 1915, Cockran revealed that although at the outset of the international conflict he believed the United States could remain outside of it, it

¹⁴Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, pp. 374-378, 381-389; Dexter Perkins, The Evolution of American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 68; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 175, Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, pp. 46-47.

had become evident after the sixteen months of continued "slaughter" that the theater of war had widened, and would continue to do so, with the possibility that this nation could not long remain aloof. Reversing his earlier stance on the President's role he asserted that the way to avert involvement would come through mediation in which Wilson could act as the moral force in bringing the hostile parties together. Cockran concluded that Wilson remained the only agent who could bring about a settlement. Should the Chief Executive succeed in getting the belligerents to state definitely their terms of peace, formal negotiations could begin within a few weeks. If on the other hand, they refused to disclose their aims and the fighting continued until one side vanquished the other, Cockran conceded that the President could justifiably take measures to prevent further injuries to Americans. Moreover, in the event of an early peace, Wilson could leave the question of damages incurred from submarine attack to diplomacy. In either case American neutrality would remain unimpaired.¹⁵

A few days after Cockran's speech, former Secretary of State,

¹⁵Cockran, "A Plea for Peace," Speech Delivered at the Chicago Coliseum, November 29, 1915, Cockran MSS. Also in a pamphlet, A Plea for Peace (New York: Home Press, 1915), pp. 4, 8, 11, 13-18. Ibid. Judge Samuel Alschuler of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals presided. The audience comprised people of all religious backgrounds. Fifteen thousand people attended. Cockran also pointed out that the recent demands for munitions had caused an upswing in industrial conditions but he cautioned that it offered only temporary relief. Fundamental economic problems could not be solved in such a way he said. After those demands would terminate another depression would follow.

William Jennings Bryan, a pacifist, spoke in the same vein, offering similar suggestions. Cockran wrote to Wilson's private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, asking that the President consider these proposals and he enclosed a copy of his speech. He asked Tumulty why the President had failed to comment about Bryan's suggestions when they had received so much publicity. Cockran, offering his own explanation, suggested that Wilson's silence probably could be attributed to the failure of Bryan to offer practical measures on how to achieve peace or to find legal foundations for the role of the President in mediation.¹⁶ In a letter to Judge M. McD. Bodkin some months later, Cockran explained that he did not mean for Wilson to intervene to compel peace or even to influence terms but only to ask each side to state the conditions under which they would consent to a cease fire. Moreover, Cockran did not think that Wilson should make this demand on humanitarian grounds or even that the United States should act as an international policeman. He merely thought of this as a way the administration could inform itself of the conditions which might determine its course with respect to injuries suffered at the hands of the belligerents.¹⁷

¹⁶Cockran to Tumulty, December 16, 1915, Cockran MSS. New York Times, February 7, 1916, p. 4. Cockran spoke at the New Rochelle Forum on preparedness. He said that Wilson should insist that the belligerent powers tell what they were fighting for and how long they proposed to keep on destroying the human race, as well as what they would accept as terms of peace to lay down their arms.

¹⁷Cockran to Judge M. McD. Bodkin, April 18, 1916, Letterbook #26, pp. 190-193, Cockran MSS.

In late 1915 and early 1916 Wilson attempted to follow a path similar to that suggested by Cockran when he and Colonel House planned a third mission to Europe. House arrived in Europe January 1916 to sound out Germany, Britain and France on the terms they would accept to cease fighting. The mission failed once again, because none of those diplomats he interviewed felt ready to discuss serious peace plans.¹⁸

In March 1916 a German U-boat commander violated German promises to cease attacks on unarmed vessels when he ordered the torpedoing of an unarmed French passenger ship, the *Sussex*. Wilson, outraged because of American injuries, sent an ultimatum to Germany declaring that unless the Germans ended their barbarous attacks on passenger carrying vessels, the United States would have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with her. Avoiding a confrontation, Germany once again promised to refrain.¹⁹

¹⁸ Seymour, ed., Intimate Papers, II, 93, 101-102, 112-114, 117-204. These pages cover the plans between Wilson and House as well as the discussions House had with European diplomats while in Europe--until March, 1916. In August all hope fell through. House had hoped to promote an Anglo-American entente, if the Germans remained intransigent but even the British did not cooperate in the end. House had proposed a peace based on naval and military disarmament and a League of Nations to enforce it. This last recommendation came from Lord E. Grey.

¹⁹ Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, pp. 47-48. After the second note following the sinking of the *Lusitania* Germany only partially gave way. When on August 19 another liner was sunk, The Arabic, peace was saved by the German ambassador Johann V. Bernstorff. He succeeded with difficulty in notifying Lansing that "Liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning, and without assuring the safety of the lives of non-combatants, provided

When it looked as if the administration would respond to the demands of the interventionists Cockran protested. He declared that he did not mean to deny the necessity for military measures which he finally accepted as a necessary evil but he deplored the fact that organized government could deal effectively with conflicts only through threats and force. He prophesied that if, unfortunately, the United States would have to arm, she would have to become the strongest military power in the world. Reiterating his old argument of militarism's deleterious effects on the economy, he reminded his audience in August at the American Federation of Catholic Societies' annual convention held at Madison Square Garden, that under such conditions American prosperity would eventually suffer. Ignoring technological advancement, Cockran still thought of production depending entirely upon the efficiency of young labor. He asserted that the needs of standing army and a civilian population could not be provided for both adequately and efficiently at the same time.²⁰

Before the arrival of fall, the stresses and strains with Germany diminished markedly. An intensification of economic war-

that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance," Link, Woodrow Wilson and Progressive Era, p. 215-218, May 4, 1916 The Emperor submitted, promised to abandon submarine activity in war zone and would observe rules of visit and search before sending merchant vessels--inside and outside of zone. Wilson accepted May 8, 1916.

²⁰Cockran, Address Delivered at the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Catholic Societies, Madison Square Garden, August 20, 1916, Cockran MSS.

fare between the United States and Great Britain displaced concern with the U-boat matter. As the British blockade increased in severity, many newspapers, even those favoring the Allies, demanded strong counter-measures. The impending presidential campaign complicated these difficulties. British repressions of Irish revolutionaries aggravated the situation. Anti-British sentiment, already prevalent among Irish-Americans, became widespread. A number of meetings were held to protest the British treatment of Irish nationalists.²¹

Cockran had for almost twenty five years devoted himself to the Irish cause. As early as 1893 he had supported the principle of Home Rule for Ireland but with the qualification that only through economic independence and prosperity could the land of his birth succeed in achieving its goals. He found the ideas and remedies proposed by Horace Plunkett, the Irish patriot closer to his own than those of the extremists. Cockran had assailed England for keeping Ireland from her natural development and for inflicting a loss on all humanity by depriving it of Ireland's contribution to international wealth and prosperity.²² Cockran joined only two Irish organizations,

²¹ Carl Wittke, The Irish in America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), pp. 279-280.

²² New York Times, March 27, 1893, p. 5. Churchill to Cockran, April 12, 1896, Cockran MSS., Cockran to Horace Plunkett, January 21, 1897, Ibid., Cockran to Plunkett, May 24, 1898, Letterbook #4, pp. 38-39, Ibid., Plunkett to Cockran, May 25, 1901, Ibid.; New York Times, March 26, 1903, p. 8, March 27, 1903, p. 3. The Irish Party of the House of Commons committed itself to the principle of

the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and the American-Irish Historical Society. He had, however, often participated in delegations welcoming Irish patriots to these shores.²³ Despite the enthusiasm of his contemporaries for rectifying Ireland's plight they could not agree about how she could best achieve independence. In great demand as a speaker at Irish nationalist rallies Cockran had refused to speak when the dissent among his friends threatened to become volatile.²⁴ Regardless of his personal opinions Cockran had deferred to the Irish people in interpreting the nature of their independence.²⁵ In 1913, on the eve of the Irish revolution land reform had been established and Home Rule approved by the British Parliament. A head-on collision between Irish Protestants and Catholics had threatened unification. Partition seemed the only solution to many nationalists but Cockran had rejected it because, with great prescience, he predicted that any attempt to reunite that land in the future would meet with failure.²⁶

of land reform. John Redmond offered amendments which the members refused; June 17, 1903, p. 5, June 25, 1903, p. 3. New York Evening Post, November 20, 1910, Cockran MSS.; The Gaelic American, March 10, 1923, p. 7.

²³ New York Times, July 24, 1899, p. 7, February 7, 1900, p. 3, June 29m 1901, p. 2,,9, June 14, 1903, p. 4; Irish World, October 2, 1902, Cockran MSS.; Patrick Ford to Cockran, October 4, 1902, Ibid., Cockran visited Ireland and England. He was asked to enter Parliament but refused because he would not give up his American citizenship.

²⁴ New York Times, March 5, 1906, p. 2; John Devoy to Cockran, September 9, 1903, Cockran Mss.; Cockran to Ford, September 17, 1903, Ibid.

²⁵ New York Evening Post, November 19, 1910, Cockran MSS. This is reprinted from the London Standard; Cockran to Lord Grey, March 24, 1910, Ibid.

²⁶ Cockran to Marlborough, May 14, 1913, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Moreton Frewen, March 24, 1914, May 19, 1914, Ibid.

With the outbreak of World War I and the problem of unification unsettled, John Redmond, leader of the Irish party in Parliament agreed to postpone the question until after the war and to support the mother country. Irish everywhere disagreed and called Redmond a traitor. Cockran deplored this attitude and even opposed a convention of Irish societies in the United States, to determine Irish-American sentiment about the war. He also denounced those hyphenates who thought of themselves as other than full-fledged Americans. However, when the Easter Rebellion broke out in 1916 and the British executed many Irish patriots, Cockran took a partisan position and denounced England for its ruthlessness. Speaking at a mass protest rally in May, at Carnegie Hall Cockran called for American intervention.²⁷

In June Irish-Americans held a rally to raise money for a relief fund to aid the homeland families of those who had been executed in Ireland. On June 25, at another meeting held in Boston, Cockran repeated his call for American intervention as he had done

²⁷Cockran to Maurice Donnelly, October 2, 1914, Ibid., William Dillon to Cockran, October 22, 1914, Ibid.; Irish World, May 20, 1916, June 25, 1916, Ibid.; Cockran to P. J. King, President of the Catholic Club of New York, March 30, 1917. Letterbook #27, pp. 278-280, Ibid.; Cockran to Medill McCormick, May 2, 1917, Ibid.; New York Times, May 13, 1916, p. 2; Carl Wittke, Irish in America, pp. 273-274, 280. Cockran had helped Sir Roger Casement, one of the leaders of the uprising, two years earlier to raise money for the Irish cause. Later Casement went to Germany for aid (1916). When his mission became known to the English authorities they captured him on his return to Ireland. He and a number of others were executed. Cockran's papers included correspondence with Casement.

almost twenty years earlier in sympathy for the Cubans. He compared the conditions in Ireland with those in Cuba, declaring that while the latter had experienced tyranny of only ten years duration, Ireland had suffered for centuries.²⁸

All the war related issues such as the need to prepare, the relations of the United States with Great Britain and Germany, mediation, peace and the Irish question were injected into the 1916 Presidential campaign. In June the Democrats renominated Wilson for the office and the Republicans selected as Presidential nominee Charles Evans Hughes; this was endorsed by the Progressives.²⁹ The candidate who would face the questions squarely, Cockran said, would win. Still unaffiliated with any political organization, Cockran took some time to make up his mind whether to support Hughes or Wilson. By the end of September, the orator decided in favor of Wilson. Two factors influenced Cockran. He approved of Wilson's signing of the Adamson Act, the eight-hour-a day law for railroad workers. The

²⁸ New York Times, May 13, 1916, p. 2; Irish World, May 20, 1916, June 17, 1916, Cockran MSS.; Cockran, Speech Delivered in Boston Asking for American Intervention in Ireland, June 25, 1916, Ibid.

²⁹ Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 360-362. Some Progressives planned to vote for Wilson because they disapproved of the reconciliation with Republicans. Roosevelt worked hard to persuade them to back Hughes. See John Morton Blum, Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1956), pp. 123-124; Wittke, Irish in America, p. 281.

President did it in order to avert a nationwide railroad strike. In his criticism of Wilson's domestic policies Hughes singled out the President's support of the law as a betrayal of arbitration and capitulation to the demands of the special interests of labor. Wilson, in his vigorous defense of his actions, vigorously brought many progressives and social justice champions into his camp.³⁰ Cockran, among them, characterized the objections of Hughes as singularly unimpressive and outdated. Cockran rejected Hughes for an additional reason. He disliked the Republican backers many of whom he claimed numbered among the most powerful industrialists who would eventually involve the United States in the war and an arms race afterwards. For Cockran, therefore, a Hughes victory spelled danger for the country.³¹

Thomas J. Walsh, Senator from Montana, who was responsible for Wilson's Midwestern campaign, asked Cockran to speak at a rally for the President at Butte, Montana. Cockran replied that he would probably vote for Wilson rather than Hughes but "between voting against a candidate and taking the platform to urge election of his opponent there is a difference." The reason he would vote for Wilson

³⁰ Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 238-240; Cockran to Senator [Walsh?], September 8, 1916, September 22, 1916, Cockran MSS. The letter to Senator Walsh did not indicate an addressee.

³¹ Cockran to Senator [Walsh?] September 8, 1916, September 22, 1916; Cockran to Bainbridge Colby, October 2, 1916, Ibid.

had nothing to do with the platform of the party. If Cockran were to campaign it must be to state his own views of the situation which confronted the United States. Cockran said that he felt impelled as an American citizen, however, to place his views on paper, submit them to the Democratic committee and if they approved of them he would gladly appear at Butte or elsewhere and expound on them to the best of his ability.³²

On September 22, 1916 Cockran sent a memorandum to Walsh in which he stated his reasons for backing Wilson. He described how the war had already transformed this nation from a relatively unarmed power into one that had a defense establishment greater than any that could be found in the world only a few years earlier. The American economy also reflected this impact through a fifty percent increase in the cost of living. Cockran pointed out that while most people cared about the consequences of the war on the United States they still rejected the possibility of intervention. They also realized that the effects of the war's prolongation could be increasingly damaging. In contrast to Hughes, Wilson abhorred war and would engage in it only if no other alternative could be found to avoid "injustice or dishonor." Wilson's election would be an assurance to everyone that the American people passionately associated themselves with peace. In contrast with Hughes whose policies would guarantee an

³²Cockran to Senator [Walsh ?] September 8, 1916, Cockran MSS.

arms race, the election of Wilson would be an opportunity to achieve disarmament since he had proven in the past that he opposed an increase in military expenditures. Cockran also recommended that Wilson should stress as the principal justification for his re-election his success in keeping the United States out of the war.³³

There is no indication in Cockran's papers whether he actually stumped for Wilson but it is noteworthy that shortly after he wrote his letter to Walsh that Wilson, on September 30, 1916 sounded the keynote to his campaign by characterizing the Republicans as a war party and warned that Hughes election would lead to intervention. Wilson promised to keep the American people out of war if they re-elected him. Senator Walsh sent instructions to orators to adopt the peace slogan, "he kept us out of war."³⁴

Wilson won by a narrow margin with a popular vote of 9,129,606 and an electoral count of 277 as against Hughes who received 8,538,221 votes and 254 electoral count.³⁵ George Mowry, author of Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, says that Wilson won because he stressed foreign policy and peace. Mowry adds that Hughes lost because he failed to win the progressives in the

³³ Cockran to Senator [Walsh?], September 22, 1916, Cockran MSS. Cockran said that he opposed a league of nations because he doubted whether nations would give up their sovereignty; Osgood, Ideals, p. 248. Osgood writes that Bryan was the only prominent political figure of either major party who had taken an anti-league stand by December 1916.

³⁴ Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 241-243.

³⁵ Duroselle, Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 52.

West.³⁶ Arthur Link and Carl Wittke claim that Wilson came in with only a small margin because the Eastern cities, dominated by Irish, defected from the Democratic party. This resulted from Wilson's failure to intervene in behalf of the Irish during the 1916 Easter rebellion.³⁷

Cockran called the election of Wilson a "revolution" in which the electorate rejected both political parties because they dealt with trivialities. The leaders failed to discern the public interest in the war. The people, declared Cockran, always wiser than politicians, calmly disregarded platforms and oratory, repudiated the parties, and gave Wilson their support.³⁸

³⁶ Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 362. Wilson alienated pro-German Americans but carried the border states, the South and most of the trans-Mississippi West where women held a strong influence in politics. Wilson also carried the normally Republican States of California, Washington, Utah and North Dakota.

³⁷ Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 251. Many Catholic journals and much of the hierarchy opposed Wilson. They disliked his Mexican policy and felt betrayed by his anti-Irish attitude. Wittke, The Irish in America, p. 282. Wilson carried strong German centers such as Milwaukee and St. Louis but in the Eastern cities dominated by Irish the Democratic votes fell off markedly. Hughes polled the greatest votes in some areas where the hyphenated Americans were smallest in number.

³⁸ Cockran, Speech Delivered at the Brooklyn Civic Club, December 6, 1916, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Senator [Walsh ?] September 22, 1916, Ibid. Cockran wrote, "The extraordinarily large vote cast in Maine a few days ago, following a campaign where popular indifference to political speeches was conspicuous, discloses a condition, which I think is general throughout the country. The people are deeply concerned about the results of the election, but they are singularly indifferent to the discussions which so far have preceded it. . . . For this I think Mr. Hughes is mainly responsible."

Historian Charles Seymour wrote in the Intimate Papers of Colonel House that even as the final election reports came in from California, indications existed that the peaceful relations with Germany, brought about by the Sussex pledge, could not continue. Germany planned resumption of her unrestricted submarine warfare. It soon became clear that Wilson could not fulfill his promise of keeping this nation out of war much longer. In a series of last ditch efforts to act as negotiator he once again appealed to the belligerents to state their war aims in order to lay a ground work for a permanent peace.³⁹ In January 1917 he followed this up with a speech before the Senate in which he obligated this nation to a policy of "peace without victory." Not long after, the German government officially announced that it would resume its U-boat campaign on February 1.⁴⁰

On February 3, 1917 the President went before Congress and

³⁹House, ed., Intimate Papers, II, 387-388; Thomas A. Bailey, Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), pp. 5-6; Osgood, Ideals, p. 251.

⁴⁰Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, 1917-1923 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946), pp. 18, 149. Daniels indicated the date of the note as January 9, 1917, and it came from Wilhelm; Seymour, Intimate Papers, II, 417-418, 431-435. On January 31, 1917 the German ambassador announced it to Colonel Edward M. House in a note.

asked for legislation to sanction arming American merchant ships. Nevertheless public opinion did not begin to crystalize in favor of intervention until the end of March after the disclosure in the press of the Zimmerman note.⁴¹ Thereafter, pacifism subsided in the West and Americans, in general were ready for war, including William Bourke Cockran. In March, the Germans attacked American ships, as they had warned. Wilson had enough evidence of German intentions, and went before Congress on April 2, 1917 and asked for a declaration of war against Germany. He told the members that the United States would enter the fight to make the world safe for democracy and would conduct the war "without rancor" and "without selfish object." On April 6, 1917 the United States Congress acceded to the President's request and joined the Allies.⁴²

Reluctantly Cockran had arrived at the conclusion that neutrality could no longer be maintained and that America must fight. He wrote to Joseph Tumulty of his approval of the President's action.

⁴¹Daniels, Wilson Era, p. 22. The President and the cabinet decided on March 20, 1917 to go to war; Barbara Tuchman, The Zimmermann Telegram (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), pp. 7, 145-148, 157-158, 165-172, 175-178. Arthur Zimmermann, the German Foreign Secretary cabled the German minister in Mexico that in the event of war he should negotiate a German-Mexican alliance and encourage Japan to join as well. Germany promised that in the event of victory over the United States Germany would return to Mexico the session of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. The British intercepted and decoded the message.

⁴²Seymour, Intimate Papers, II, 454-458, 461-466, 468-469; Daniels, Wilson Era, pp. 23, 33; Bailey, Lost Peace, pp. 8-10.

action because of the pledge to vindicate the rights of this nation and those of all mankind. Cockran hailed Wilson's lofty pronouncement that law should govern the relations of men as well as nations. He anticipated that the President's declarations before the Congress would be received by posterity as the most significant message "uttered" by a leader since "Urban II preached for the First Crusade" in the eleventh century. Cockran asserted that Wilson had raised the level of a "barbarous" destructive struggle to a momentous movement for the advancement of civilization by offering to all nations the hope of democracy.⁴³ A few days later Cockran told an audience at a "war dinner" held by the Society of Illustrators that until the United States entered the conflict none of the belligerents could give good reasons for the war. Not everyone agreed with Cockran's interpretation of Wilson's role, however, because a faction of those present hissed the orator.⁴⁴

After the United States entered the war, the need to mobilize the nations economy became increasingly evident. The Wilson administration gradually took control of resources and services under emergency powers granted to the President as commander-in-chief. The Council of National Defense, established in 1916 as part of the preparedness program, created on July 28, 1917 the War Industries Board with the

⁴³Cockran to Tumulty, April 13, 1917, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁴New York Times, April 18, 1917, p. 6.

power to coordinate the production and distribution of industrial goods. In August 1917 under the Level Act which regulated agriculture, Wilson created the Food Administration to oversee the distribution of food. To facilitate the distribution of fuel and the transportation of supplies the Railroad and Fuel Administrations came into being. By April 1918 labor relations came under the aegis of the federal agency, the National War Labor Board. By the end of the war the United States government had infiltrated every sector of the economy and civilian life of the nation.⁴⁵ Mobilization on such a grand scale naturally created popular debate about its effects in the future and Cockran became one of the outspoken defenders of the policies of Wilson.

During the early days of mobilization many Americans charged the policies would inevitably lead to socialism. Cockran refuted these apprehensions by asserting that to nationalize industry as a means of defense did not logically lead to the conclusion that socialism must be the final outcome. He pointed out that a modern army consisted of a whole population and to make it more effective the entire nation consequently had to be organized on a military basis. Since the

⁴⁵ Blum, Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality, pp. 136-143; Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, pp. 71-72; John Morton Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), pp. 141-145. Blum discussed Tumulty's role and the attitudes towards Wilson's policies.

national government is the only agency which has full knowledge of the conduct of the war and the resources available for its pursuit it alone had to coordinate and distribute the supplies. If an administration is justified in conscripting men to fight and die, what precludes it from doing the same with regard to wealth and property? "Mobilization of the country's resources simply requires the creation of a third great fighting army by the government. Besides the army and the navy . . . there should be a department of industry with one chief responsible to the President," Cockran said. This meant that labor and property be devoted to the single minded purpose of victory.⁴⁶

Cockran's perspective concerning America's total economic effort embraced also providing untrammelled aid to its allies. When Congress debated legislation authorizing advances of money to the Allies, Cockran wrote to Claude Kitchin, Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, that he believed it unwise for aid to be given in the form of loans. Cockran pointed out that this country had been shielded from the war by the blood and efforts of its allies and therefore owed them a debt of gratitude. The United States should assume the financial burden of the fight now that it had entered the war. The money advanced would be spent here anyway, and that would bolster the American economy. To treat this help as loans would

⁴⁶Cockran to Theodore Vail, November 14, 1917, Cockran MSS.; Vail to Cockran, (December, 1917, ?) Ibid. Vail seemed very impressed with Cockran's reasoning and suggested that he should make a public statement about it.

be to require champions of "our cause" to pay for the weapons used in battling for "us" declared Cockran. He feared that an attempt to establish a relationship of debtor and creditor between two sovereignties would inevitably prove a source of future disputes and furnish a sad ending to a "glorious struggle."⁴⁷

Cockran did more than write letters during the war. As other orators, writers, teachers and artists, he found the Committee on Public Information a convenient channel through which he could do his part in mobilizing public opinion behind the war effort. On a number of occasions at public gatherings he said that the war had become America's crusade to guarantee freedom not only for the Allies but for Germany, also. As guest speaker at the New Rochelle Forum, he declared that from the moment Germany embarked upon imperialist adventure, she violated international law. He explained that Americans had the duty to convince the German people that this nation proposed not to humiliate or injure them but to liberate them from their autocratic leaders. America's victory, declared Cockran, would be Germany's.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Cockran to Claude Kitchin, House of Representatives, April 18, 1917, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁸ Cockran, Speech Delivered at a Forum, New Rochelle, New York, December 1, 1917, Ibid.; Committee on Public Information to Cockran, January 28, 1918, Ibid.; Blum, Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality, pp. 141-142; Daniels, Wilson Era, pp. 222-224. On April 14, 1917, Wilson issued the Executive Order in accord with Robert Lansing, Secretary of State; Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, and Newton Baker, Secretary of War, to deal with "censorship and

As a loyal American although deeply sympathetic to the Irish cause, he decided, to avoid embarrassing the Administration by ceasing all public discussion on that matter for the duration. He wrote to Congressman Medill McCormick in May 1917, that ever since the country entered the European war he had felt deeply that its success should absorb the entire attention of every American and therefore, "I have declined to discuss the Irish question except in so far as it may affect our part in the gigantic struggle against Germany and her allies." Cockran added that when peace returned then all Americans would once again enjoy the privilege of debating matters affecting the welfare of other people. While the war lasted, he said, every American "should have but one absorption, and that is to end it quickly and decisively." He felt that arguing about Irish emancipation under the present conditions, conceivably might endanger prospects for Ireland's independence. Unfortunately, discussion frequently points out wide differences of opinion, he declared, and would be cited by enemies of Ireland to promote the notion that Irishmen could not cooperate in public affairs.⁴⁹

publicity." Creel became civilian chairman. Lansing wanted strict censorship and finally was forced to withdraw from the work of the committee. Opposition against Creel grew in Congress. They accused him of being both too lenient and too powerful, New York Times, February 3, 1918, Section I, p. 8. Wilson supported George Creel against his detractors.

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Cockran to Medill McCormick, May 2, 1917, Cockran MSS.

Cockran did not follow his own advice about discussion when it came to the Mooney case, however. He had appealed to the President during the war to intercede in the case of the convicted labor leader to show the world that this country stood for justice. The case had become a cause celebre shortly before the war broke out and lasted until the end of the 1930's. Thomas Mooney, a labor agitator, and five others had been accused of exploding a bomb during a Preparedness Day Parade on Market Street in San Francisco on July 22, 1916. Cockran defended Mooney but the latter received the death sentence despite proven perjured testimony on the part of the State's witness.⁵⁰ Upon appeal the California Court of Appeals refused a new trial on the ground that the law precluded a judgment from being set aside on such testimony. Mooney's case had precipitated protests both from home and abroad. Cockran, believing that Mooney was a victim of a conspiracy to use him as a scapegoat to discredit the labor movement in California, appealed to the President to use his powers as commander-in-chief of the army and navy to bring about a new trial. Cockran argued that if Mooney received the maximum penalty it would cast doubt on America's credibility, specifically the President's statement about the reasons this country entered the war. Hundreds of telegrams from labor unions

⁵⁰Lillian Symes, "Our American Dreyfus Case: A Challenge to California Justice" (California: Inter-Religious Committee for Justice for Thomas H. Mooney, 1935), pp. 8-9. Ten people were killed and forty wounded. Frank Oxman was imported by District Attorney Fickert as the chief witness. Judge Franklin A. Griffin who presided at the trial sentenced Mooney on the Oxman testimony. Later Oxman admitted he had perjured himself, was tried but acquitted. Judge Griffin tried for fourteen years to secure a pardon for Mooney but to no avail; United

throughout the United States asked Wilson to intercede in behalf of Mooney or at least to call for a new trial. A telegram from Robert Lansing disclosed the widespread interest in the case both in Britain and the continent where sentiment in Mooney's favor had been increasing. After three appeals from Wilson the Governor of California in November 1918 commuted Mooney's sentence to life imprisonment. Not until 1939 after twenty-three years of litigation, begun by Bourke Cockran in 1916, and continued by Thomas J. Walsh, the New York Attorney chosen by Cockran to carry on for him after 1923, did Mooney finally gain freedom.⁵¹

States Senate, 76th Congress, 2nd Session, Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Thomas Mooney, Hearings and S. J. Res. 127, Joint Resolution to the Hon. Frank F. Merriam, Governor of California to Grant Thomas J. Mooney a Full and Complete Pardon (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 1. The Senate Committee held hearings in order to justify their joint resolution asking the Governor of California to grant a pardon to Mooney on December 15, 1937.

⁵¹Cockran, Speech Delivered at a Mass Meeting in Chicago under the Auspices of the Chicago Federation of Labor for the Purpose of Petitioning the Federal Government to Investigate the Thomas J. Mooney Case, 1917, Cockran MSS.; Cockran. "The Mooney Case," Address by Hon. W. Bourke Cockran at Washington D.C., July 28, 1918, also printed by the International Workers Defense League, Ibid.; New York Times, July 29, 1918, p. 9. See Woodrow Wilson Papers, Mooney File #VI, 4261, Library of Congress. Telegrams from Cockran March 15, 1918, August 14, 1918. Acknowledgement from Wilson's office, August 22, 1918. The file included hundreds of telegrams from labor unions all over the United States calling for intercession asking for a new trial; Robert Lansing to Wilson, June 27, 1918, Ibid.; Lillian Symes, "Our American Dreyfus Case," pp. 10-12. Wilson was moved by labor demonstrations before American embassies abroad to take a hand in the affair. The Mediation Commission headed by Felix Frankfurter investigated the case and found Mooney to be innocent. The Commission found he had not been given a fair trial; U.S. Judiciary Committee, Thomas A. Mooney, pp. 1-2. Walsh said that Cockran

The admiration of Cockran for Wilson had begun to wane in 1918. The coalition that had elected the President in 1916 also began to falter. His domestic program had met with criticism while the restrictions imposed by the war emergency powers caused Americans to lose their enthusiasm for him. Republicans exploited the growing internal discontent and attacked Wilson's ideal of a peace without victory. In response, Wilson and the Democratic leaders called upon the voters in the fall Congressional election to show their support of the Administration's foreign policy by providing them with a partisan Democratic majority.⁵²

Cockran objected to this appeal because he thought it an impolitic move fraught with danger to the role of Wilson at the coming peace conference. Before Wilson issued this call, Cockran said, Americans, at least superficially, unanimously favored his war policy. With this partisan appeal every vote cast for a Republican representative would be considered a declaration of hostility to it. The negotia-

had volunteered his services and paid his own expenses. The case had created a nationwide concern over the growing distrust of the American judicial process. The Senate committee urged President Franklin D. Roosevelt to persuade Governor Merriam of California to grant full pardon to Mooney.

⁵² Blum, Woodrow Wilson and the Politic of Morality, pp. 153-154; Smith, The Great Departure, pp. 111-112.

tors at Paris, Cockran believed, would measure Wilson's influence by the degree to which they thought him to be truly representative of American sentiment on the kind of peace he wanted to achieve.

Cockran's concern about Wilson's credibility at the peace conference had to do with his own aspirations about a disarmed world and the fate of Ireland. He did not want to see any obstacles placed in the way of Irish independence⁵³ or settlement of international disputes through peaceful means.⁵³

As Cockran had feared, the Republicans captured both Houses of Congress and claimed that Wilson had lost the vote of confidence in his leadership and policies. Based on these results they declared that he had no right to speak for the American people in Paris. Soon after the election Wilson announced the names of the delegation which would accompany him to the peace conference. It was a completely partisan selection made up with one exception, of Democrats.⁵⁴

⁵³Cockran Enclosure to Moreton, [Martin?] , 1918, Cockran MSS.

⁵⁴Smith, Great Departure, pp. 112-115; Herbert Hoover, The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 14-17, 61, 67. Others suggested were William H. Taft and Charles E. Hughes of the Republican Party; Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), p. 23. Lansing opposed Wilson's decision to go to Paris. Hoover says that he also opposed it because Wilson's New World idealism would clash seriously with the Old World concepts of the Allied statesmen, and he feared that Wilson would be outvoted by them. Others who objected were Vance McCormick, Chairman of the War Trade Board, Bernard Baruch, Chairman of War Industries Board and a number of others.

Cockran's complete disavowal of Wilson came after the latter returned from Paris with the Versailles Treaty in 1919. During the war, Wilson had begun to formulate the principles which would be the basis of the peace settlement. He defined them in a series of four addresses with the first delivered before Congress on January 8, 1918 and known as the Fourteen Points. Cockran had always held three of these in high esteem. They were--one, open covenants of peace openly arrived at; two, impartial adjustments of colonial claims; three, reduction of armaments "to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety." On February 11th, the President reiterated that self-determination "is not a mere phrase" but "an imperative principle of action."⁵⁵ Thus, after the signing of the Armistice of November 11, 1918 and when Wilson departed for Europe to negotiate the peace treaty, Cockran had great confidence in the fulfillment of his aspirations. The document with which Wilson returned, Cockran charged had violated most of the fourteen points, and in particular that of self-determination but for a few nationalities. Germany remained the only disarmed power and the spoils of the war were divided among the big powers, France and Britain. Article ten of the Versailles Treaty for Wilson meant that peace in the world could be maintained through the League of Nations which to Cockran represented an agency created for the protection of the "robbers"

⁵⁵ Hoover, Ordeal, pp. 19-27. The other two speeches he delivered on July 4, 1918 and September 17, 1918.

at the peace conference.⁵⁶

Cockran displayed the true force of his anger against Wilson when he called the Versailles Treaty the product of the "Big Two," Great Britain and France with Wilson--"the onlooker" allowing the others to "fashion the future of the world according to their will." They appointed themselves arbiters of the world with Wilson's consent, he declared. The only justification for their arbitrary assumption of power rested on having achieved victory through force--an idea inimical to the American mission in the war. The Treaty represented a document dividing the spoils of the Big Three robberies and Article Ten provided the agency through which they would secure their power to control and divide the world among themselves. The League would not guarantee peace but would actually supply a rationale for arming and continuing warfare.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Bailey, Lost Peace, pp. 181-183. Bailey says that the French thought of the League as an instrument for protecting the military alliances of the victors and that it might add something to French defenses when involved with other guarantees; Cockran, Speech on Ireland delivered in opposition to the United States ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919, Cockran MSS.; Robert Lansing, Peace Negotiations, pp. 96-97. Lansing wrote that self-determination could not be practically applied without imperiling national safety. He thought that the President was inviting trouble by pressing for self-determination. He asked "What effect would it have on the Irish . . . will it not breed discontent. . . . The phrase is loaded with dynamite." Hoover, Ordeal, pp. 265-267. Wilson arrived in New York July 8, 1919. He submitted the treaty to the Senate on July 10, 1919.

⁵⁷ Cockran, Speech on Ireland and Expressing Opposition to the Entrance of the United States into the League of Nations, (1919, at the Senate Hearings?), Cockran MSS.

Cockran had expressed his thoughts on international agencies in a 1916 letter to Judge M. Mc Bodkin. Bodkin had suggested the creation of an international court empowered to decide questions arising between nations and backed up by a military force sufficient to enforce its decisions. Cockran considered the idea impossible of realization because it meant creating one nation out of many. Since sovereignty is unconditional, a law unto itself, no nation could accept directives from an outside source and remain independent. To deprive a country of the power to decide whether or not it should engage in war, for example, constituted abrogation of that country's sovereignty, declared Cockran. An international tribunal with power to enforce peace in every part of the world could be established only in one of two ways, said Cockran, by force or by inducing all nations to acknowledge its authority. Cockran did not think that nations would surrender their sovereignty voluntarily. To attempt to enforce peace in such a way would eventuate in wars vastly more destructive than the present one, he prophesied.⁵⁸

In regard to the question of self determination, Cockran considered the struggle of Ireland for independence as typical of all weak nations dominated by an imperialist power. Ireland had demonstrated

⁵⁸Cockran to Judge M. Mc. Bodkin, April 18, 1916, Letterbook #26, pp. 190-193, Cockran MSS.

her unswerving determination for independence and freedom from outside oppression longer than any other nation in the world and had earned the right to decide the conditions of her political existence. Before Wilson's departure for Paris various meetings had been called urging the right of Ireland to be heard and to make her claim for self-determination. Cockran declined to attend. He believed that to make such a demand implied doubt of Wilson's intentions. In the light of the Versailles Treaty, it seemed perfectly clear to the orator that those who did not trust Wilson's purposes had been fully justified. As long as Wilson remained faithful to the objectives he expressed as a leader of humanity, Cockran could give him his confidence. Wilson had held out the promise that diplomacy would effectively establish international justice and progress. But, as Cockran lamented, from the moment the President stepped aboard the ship bound for Europe, he abdicated the leadership which he had established by his own words. Cockran accused Wilson of violating not only the Fourteen Points but also the canons of morality and justice. He won the war to establish equal rights for all nations but came back with a cynical treaty dictated by the Big Three. Cockran predicted that the Versailles Treaty would be defeated by the Senate and rejected by the American people.⁵⁹ What particularly rankled Cockran was that Ireland's independence required a disarmed world but this could not be achieved under

⁵⁹Cockran, Speech Opposing United States Entry into the League, 1919, Cockran MSS.

the conditions Wilson helped create at Paris. From a personal standpoint Wilson demonstrated a coolness if not hostility to the Irish cause.⁶⁰

No longer could Cockran believe that he should depend on a political leader to help him achieve a dream. He continued to work untiringly for his beloved birthplace. Before he died, despite many disappointing setbacks, Cockran saw the creation of a free and independent Ireland.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Wittke, The Irish in America, p. 288. Wittke writes that Wilson's anti-Irish attitude could be traced to what the President regarded as their disloyal attitude during the war. Before leaving for Paris, he refused to meet with a committee of Irish-Americans to discuss the Irish question; Nicholas Mansergh, The Irish Question, 1840-1921 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 278-279. The President regarded the solution of the Irish question more as a factor in home politics than as an integral part of the New European settlement; William V. Shannon, The American Irish (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 329-330. Shannon says that four days after Congress declared war, Wilson instructed the American ambassador in London to take up confidentially with the British government the issue of self-government for Ireland.

⁶¹ Mansergh, The Irish Question, p. 265. Ireland became independent in 1921 on December 6th; Wittke, The Irish in America, p. 292; See Cockran Manuscripts for further developments between 1919 and 1921; Cockran to Sean Nunan, Clerk of Dail Eireann of American Commission on Irish Independence, January 13, 1920; Cockran Resolution in House of Representatives, 67th Congress, 1st Session; Cockran to Mrs. McSweeney, August 11, 1921, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, March 4, 1919, p. 9, March 24, 1919, p. 2, July 5, 1919, p. 9, January 19, 1920, p. 9; January 17, 1920, January 13, 1920, January 11, 1920, Cockran MSS.; Gaelic American, March 10, 1923, pp. 1, 7. The reporter claimed that when Valera came in 1919 to the United States Cockran had warned him against the impractical plan of floating bonds issued directly in the name of the Irish Republic. Valera refused to follow Cockran's advice or that of the many lawyers and bankers who corroborated Cockran's sentiments. Nevertheless, in 1920 Cockran presided at a meeting to launch the loan. The planners hoped to float \$10,000,000 in bonds.

CHAPTER X

LAST YEARS

Cockran had returned to the Democratic party in 1920.

James McGurrin, in his biography of Cockran, writes that Cockran returned to Tammany in the fall of 1919 through the good offices of Alfred E. Smith and resumed cordial relations with Charles F. Murphy the Tammany boss.¹ Available evidence does not support McGurrin's statement. Cockran's name did not appear in the newspapers in connection with the State Democratic Party until the spring months of 1920 when the party leaders began to plan for the approaching Presidential nominating convention. The New York Times did not report Cockran's return to Tammany as a member in good standing until August of 1920. Alfred E. Smith in his autobiography said that

¹ McGurrin, Bourke Cockran, p. 321. McGurrin claims that Al Smith told him that Cockran, Thomas Smith (Secretary of Tammany Hall) Charles F. Murphy and Al Smith had dined together in a private room at the old Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City in November 1919. The meeting had been arranged by the Governor and marked the end of the long estrangement between Murphy and Cockran. McGurrin says that the latter was restored to the position of power in the inner council of Tammany. He does not give the exact date of that restoration but claims that Murphy and Cockran laughed and joked like two kids as if nothing had ever happened between them.

although he remembered he used to like to listen to Cockran speak, that he had not become acquainted with Cockran until the 1920 convention at San Francisco. Thereafter he saw a great deal of him.²

Although Cockran did not explain why he returned to the Democratic party, one can speculate about the reason. By 1920 he seemed out of tune with the trends taking place in the nation. He advocated liberal immigration laws, whereas demands grew for more restrictive legislation. He opposed prohibition in its attempt to legislate morality while advocates called for the saving of men's souls by legal imposition of their own tastes. Cockran believed that the nation should attempt to resolve the growing urban problems while special interest groups such as businessmen and farmers thought mainly of their own needs. While farmers joined business in demands for increased tariffs, Cockran called for their abolition and for more liberal international economic exchange. Republicans and old time progressives found a meeting ground on these issues, and Cockran rejected both groups.³

² Smith, Up to Now, p. 51; New York Times, April 17, 1920, p. 17, May 7, 1920, p. 1, June 17, 1920, pp. 1, 3, August 28, 1920, p. 3; Cockran's Papers do not indicate any resumption of friendly relations with Murphy nor correspondence with the boss during this period.

³ William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity 1914-1932 (New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1958), pp. 88, 100-103, 126-128, 130-131. John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy 1921-1933 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1960), 16-17, 54-59, 68-69, 73, 92-93. These works were used as the background for this comparison.

Despite his earlier disapproval of Wilson's handling of the Versailles conference, Cockran could feel both ideological and political compatability with the New York Democrats. To a large extent this was due to Al Smith's leadership. Smith had emerged from the Tammany organization, but he could sustain his independence of the machine. Smith created an atmosphere in which people could work together even though they might disagree on some matters. He encouraged the gloomy and disheartened when he objected to the hypocrisy of the prohibition laws. He fought prejudice and defended immigration and the rights of newcomers. Men of many shades of political opinion saw in him the embodiment of a new liberalism and a willingness to confront the problems of an industrial society.⁴ Cockran could freely channel his political philosophy within this environment.

Cockran came to prominence at the Democratic State Convention held at Syracuse in the spring when he became chairman of the State resolutions committee and wrote the resolutions not only on prohibition but also on universal disarmament and opposition to the United States possible participation in the League of Nations. Cockran was chosen to nominate Alfred Smith as the party choice for the Presidency.⁵

⁴Oscar Handlin, Al Smith and His America (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1958), pp. 72-74, 77-80, 82-84.

⁵New York Times, April 17, 1920, p. 17, May 7, 1920, p. 1, June 17, 1920, pp. 1, 3; New York Democrats opposed as a choice for President William Gibbs McAdoo, Wilson's son-in-law because they thought thought not only that he could not win, but he was a declared "dry." Smith disapproved of McAdoo's "dry" position and helped block his nomination; Al Smith, Up to Now, pp. 188, 209. Smith says that New York State lost \$26,000,000 in revenue as a result of the Volstead Act. The New York delegates decided to propose Smith or Cox, Governor of Ohio, before going to the convention.

In his autobiography, Up to Now, Smith recalls that Cockran went to the San Francisco convention rejuvenated and in great spirit. Cockran stood out as the leading personality in an otherwise "very tame" convention where one could find few interesting personalities, Smith writes. For instance in the prohibition debate between Cockran and Bryan, Cockran had the best of the argument, overpowering Bryan "both by reason and logic."⁶ Cockran and Bryan had served on the convention's Committee on Resolutions. When the Committee turned down Bryan's resolution for an affirmative vote on the Volstead Act, the Nebraskan offered a minority report on the floor of the convention. Cockran defended the committee report.⁷ Leake the editor of the Woodland Daily Democrat, a California newspaper, wrote that the contest between Bryan and Cockran "will never be forgotten." Both men were at their best employing every "artifice known to modern oratory." Nobody who listened "could have failed to feel a mental exhilaration" stated Leake.⁸ Al Smith contended that Cockran was the better orator of the two.⁹ Cockran argued for a modification of the Volstead Act and recommended that the states be given the power to fix alcoholic content in beverage. The great force of his appeal,

⁶Smith, Up to Now, p. 188.

⁷Democratic National Convention, Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention (San Francisco: June 28 - July 6, 1920), pp. 202, 205, 221.

⁸Woodland Daily Democrat (California) March 2, 1923, p. 2, Cockran MSS.

⁹Smith, Up to Now, p. 188.

however, rested on his assertion that politicians had no business regulating people's personal habits. In a democracy, Cockran reminded his listeners, behavior must be regulated by individual conscience and self-control. External coercion, he contended, undermines the foundations of the system. The precepts of democracy depend on the assumption that man is perfectable but by his own unhampered efforts. Notwithstanding his argument against government control, Cockran rejected demands to bring back the saloon. He cried out, "God forbid. But we don't, in order to keep out the saloon, want to overthrow our government." He wanted the localities to make their own rules in accordance with their peculiar needs.¹⁰

Despite the eloquence of both men the delegates defeated the pleas of Bryan and Cockran and ignored confirmation of a "dry" or a "wet" plank in the platform.¹¹ Smith said that party expediency and the overpowering influence of southern and western groups were responsible for the silence on prohibition in the Democratic platform.¹² Nevertheless, Cockran would carry his fight to modify the Volstead Act to Congress when he returned to Washington.

¹⁰ Official Proceedings of the Democratic Convention, pp. 220-223, 226-227; Cockran presented the majority report of the Committee on Platform and Resolutions.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 190, 202-205, 257, 260. Bryan's proposal lost 155-1/2 to 929-1/2 and Cockran's by 356 to 726-1/2. Both Cockran and Bryan presented resolutions on the floor asking for a statement in the platform. Bryan wanted an enforcement of the 18th Amendment without modification. Cockran proposed that the locality fix the alcoholic content but less than that fixed by Congress, and that the sale of light wines, cider and beer be allowed for home consumption.

¹² Smith, Up to Now, p. 209.

Cockran gave an even more impassioned and stirring oration in nominating Smith for the Presidency. The latter relates how on the previous day at the St. Francis Hotel Cockran put his arms around Smith's shoulders and pulling him to one side said, "I am about to achieve the joy of my life. For as long back as I can remember . . . I have been fanning the wind either against somebody or against something. At last I have an opportunity to be for somebody."¹³

Cockran told the convention audience that Smith's life and career represented the "most perfect platform" that could be offered to a political party. Smith's life demonstrated the promise of freedom--that opportunity is for all not for the few and privileged. Cockran depicted the New York Governor's life as "savoring more of a page of romance" than a mere biographic narrative. He told of Smith's rise from humble beginnings in a comparatively short period of sixteen years to the second highest position in the country as Governor of New York State.¹⁴

Despite the enthusiastic demonstration which followed Cockran's address, the delegates responded more to his oratory than to the subject of his speech. The convention nominated James M. Cox, Governor of Ohio, who had become known as an anti-German and a "red hunter." The endorsement of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, who

¹³ Smith, Up to Now, pp. 209-10.

¹⁴ Official Proceedings of the Democratic Convention, pp. 135-136.

wielded decisive power at the convention, contributed significantly to Cox's victory.¹⁵ Against Cox, the Republicans ran Warren G.

Harding, Senator from Ohio, described as a creature of the Old Guard but representing to many Americans the prototype of the average citizen.¹⁶

¹⁵Andrew Sinclair, The Available Man, Warren G. Harding, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 157-158. The major contender at the convention was William G. McAdoo, a cabinet member under Wilson and a reputed progressive. Despite Wilson's refusal to support McAdoo, because of his own ambition to run for a third term, a number of politicians believed McAdoo would be the best candidate both for capturing the South and West and the rural states that Wilson had won against Hughes in 1916. The "wet" leaders did not want him. Attorney General Palmer kept McAdoo from gaining the nomination because he preferred Cox' conservative record; Handlin, Al Smith, pp. 114-116. Handlin says that the division within the party followed no simple patterns. Old sectional lines separated northerners from others and westerners from easterners. He says that there were important social differences between the conservative descendents of the "Bourbons" of the 1880's and the "radical wing" which had once "flirted with populists and progressivism." The representatives of the city machines "sat uncomfortably in the same hall with rural and small town folk" who regarded them as suspicious foreigners; Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention, pp. 180-186, 190, 197-199, 202-203. The Democratic platform rejected reservations on the Versailles Treaty, but called for immediate ratification of the Treaty. They condemned the failure to revise the existing tax laws but reaffirmed the traditional policy of tariff revision. They wanted the creation of a budget system. They endorsed the 19th Amendment and supported Ireland's aspirations for independence. They endorsed the independence of the Philippines and supported a government policy of non-admission of Asiatics. Bryan proposed an amendment to the federal constitution for providing ratification of treaties by a majority vote but he lost.

¹⁶Sinclair, The Available Man, pp. 149-150, 156; Francis Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove: Warren G. Harding and His Times (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), pp. 395-396.

During this campaign Cockran received the nomination for the House of Representatives for the 16th Congressional district in New York City. Incumbent, Democratic Thomas F. Smith refused to seek that position again. Tammany had endorsed Cockran as early as August 1920 in hope of capturing the alienated Irish independent vote. He had to compete with two opponents, the Republican Warren S. Fisher and Socialist Bertha H. Mailly.¹⁷

Cockran devoted his campaign oratory to Cox's success rather than in his own behalf. To his dismay, the New York Irishman found a hostile response to the Democratic Presidential nominee both in New York and Chicago particularly with the groups he had hoped to capture. In October when he addressed a Tammany Hall rally, the Irish audience heckled him. Cockran had asserted that Harding's statement that he "would not assume to tell England what to do in her internal affairs" had actually given her the "assurance" that she might "put a torch to Ireland's villages." Skeptically someone shouted "tell us what Mr. Cox has to say about Ireland. That is what we came here for." As Cockran tried to continue, another voice interrupted him with

¹⁷New York Times, March 13, 1917, p. 7. In 1917 Cockran's friends had proposed him as a candidate for the fifteenth Congressional district. He had not yet returned to Tammany but since the organization sought to fill the seat with an "outsider" his backers thought that he would be a good choice. Tammany rejected the recommendation; July 20, 1920, p. 2; August 28, 1920, p. 3. Cockran had been proposed by some for the Senate. Murphy was cool to the idea; August 28, 1920, p. 3; November 4, 1920, p. 8.

"Wilson is in office isn't he?" Another yelled, "what have Democrats done for Ireland."¹⁸ In Chicago, later that month, Cockran lost his composure when speaking in the stockyard district's Stockyard Pavilion. He told the crowd that Cox was a friend of Ireland but the audience, harrassed the orator. In a peak of anger, he shouted back at the dissenters, "its the likes of you thats to blame for Ireland's trouble." He attributed these disturbances to Republican efforts to disrupt Democratic meetings. He refused, however, to have the noise-makers thrown out, and admitted that Wilson had done nothing fore Ireland. He asserted nevertheless that Cox would.¹⁹

Election day brought victory to Cockran despite the antagonistic receptions he had experienced. He polled 16,105 votes against Warren Fisher's 12,209 and Bertha Mailly's 2,022.²⁰ The Democrats generally lost very badly throughout the nation, including New York State. Even Al Smith the popular governor of New York State, was defeated by Nathan Miller the Republican candidate. Tammany strongholds in New York also went down to defeat. Harding carried sixty-one of sixty-two assembly districts. Al Smith wrote that the Harding carried every county in New York with a plurality of more than 1,088,000.²¹ Andrew

¹⁸ New York Times, October 9, 1920, p. 2.

¹⁹ Ibid., October 22, 1920, p. 15.

²⁰ Ibid., November 4, 1920, p. 8; John Thomson to Cockran, December 10, 1920, Cockran MSS.

²¹ James Farley, Behind the Ballots: The Personal History of a Politician (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1938), p. 29; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 214, 220.

Sinclair in his biography of Harding, The Available Man, says that the victory of the Republicans represented the glory of the normal man, the appeal to the small town and the declining institutions of the past; a last stand to hold on to the dream of rural America against the encroachment of internationalism and the city.²² Al Smith said that the Republicans could not help winning since they promised all things to all men, including the promise to recognize the independence of Ireland.²³

Cockran lost no time in offering advice to Smith about methods to avoid a similar political debacle in the 1921 New York City elections. He proposed a strategy which centered on the office of the district attorney as the key to the prospects of the next year. He told Smith, "I need not point out to you that with this great office in the hands of Republican politicians, added to their untried control of the Federal and State government, there would be no check whatever on the operations of the party machine. And this would undoubtedly result in making New York as strongly Republican

²² Sinclair, The Available Man, pp. 173, 176. Sinclair says that after the inflationary war boom had collapsed in June and industries cut back production with it concomitant fall in farm prices and increases in unemployment, Americans were tired of Wilson and his party. They wanted a change; Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove, p. 418. Harding carried 37 of the 48 states with an electoral count of 404 against 127. He received 16,152,200 popular votes while Cox had 9,147-353. Cox carried the Solid South except for Tennessee and Kentucky. The House of Representatives had a two to one majority with 289 Republicans and 142 Democrats.

²³ Smith, Up to Now, pp. 214-215, 221.

as Philadelphia was made a generation ago by precisely similar conditions." The present district attorney who had been chosen by Smith had not carried out his job well. Cockran suggested that while Smith still had the power he should replace him with a more able man.

Cockran reminded Smith

Your extraordinary popularity is in the eyes of these political managers, the most formidable asset remaining to the Democratic Party. Its reduction is, therefore, the object to which they would naturally address their strongest efforts. Might it not be charged that since the conduct of practically every important prosecution was taken by you out of Mr. Swann's hands [the district attorney in question] and placed under the direction of the Attorney General, you must have been convinced that he was incapable, or worse, and that by suffering him to continue in office you showed yourself more anxious to protect a party associate than to discharge the full duty you owed the people.²⁴

Cockran suggested that Smith place Swann on the bench where he had previously carried out "highly meritorious" service. He commented "why, then, would it not be a fine stroke of policy and a striking display of administrative capacity on your part. . . ." Cockran pointed out that this action by Smith "would spike" the gun which the Republicans expected to use with "greatest effect in the approaching municipal contest." At the same time, it would leave the party "free to select . . . the candidate who can lend most strength to the city ticket."²⁵ Apparently Smith did not follow

²⁴ Cockran to Governor Al Smith, December 9, 1920, Cockran MSS.

²⁵ Ibid.

Cockran's suggestion. Swann remained in the office until the next election. The New York Times reported in April, 1921 that Swann however, declined to run again for district attorney. Tammany received the news with little surprise. The newspaper reported that Charles F. Murphy did not favor Swann's renomination. He had another candidate in mind.²⁶

Cockran returned to Congress in the spring of 1921 as Democratic Representative from the 16th New York Congressional district. The House of Representatives in this session once again, as in the years 1904 to 1908 was in the control of the Republicans. Even the delegation from New York contained only nine Democratic Representatives while the Republicans had thirty-three members.²⁷

During the next two years he carried out his pledges to work for modification of the Volstead Act and for more liberal immigration laws, to carry on a crusade against the high tariff, to support ship subsidies and to labor untiringly for disarmament and the rights of minorities. Despite his preference for the Ways and Means Committee, he expressed satisfaction with his appointment to the equally important Committee on Foreign Affairs.²⁸ Cockran's presence in the House of

²⁶ New York Times, April 24, 1921, p. 17.

²⁷ C. E. Brown, History of New York State, IV, 350.

²⁸ Cockran to Mrs. Bourke Cockran, April 14, 1921, Cockran MSS. (Telegram)

Representatives raised an otherwise mediocre New York Democratic delegation to a more distinguished level than it might have been without him. Herbert C. Pell, Chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee, says in his *Reminiscences* that most of the New York delegation was "pretty worthless," except for two men-- Dan Riordan, the dean of the group, and Cockran. Pell says that Cockran was a capable, well educated man who gave the appearance of sincerity.²⁹ New York Governor Alfred E. Smith described Cockran as at the "height of his powers."³⁰ Marvin Jones, Democratic Representative from Texas and member of the House farm bloc in the 67th Congress, remembered Cockran as one of the great orators and as a last-resort trouble-shooter for the House Democrats.³¹

Cockran's past experience made him valuable to his party and when in trouble they often called on him, particularly during floor debates. Marvin Jones tells an amusing story in his *Reminiscences* about how frequently when the Democrats found themselves in trouble they

²⁹ "Reminiscences of Herbert C. Pell" (3 vols. Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1953), II, 274-275. Pell was a member of the Progressive County Committee, Orange County, New York. He served in Congress between 1919 and 1921.

³⁰ Smith, *Up to Now*, pp. 209-210.

³¹ "Reminiscences of Marvin Jones" (8 vols. Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1952-1953), I, 171. Jones came to Congress as a Texas Democrat and served from 1917 through the New Deal. He is presently judge on the United States District Court in Washington, D. C.

would send for Cockran. On one of those occasions they asked him to participate in a debate about policy (Jones is not clear about the nature of the subject matter) but did not give him a clear explanation of the side they wished Cockran to defend. Jones reports, "Cockran got up and tore loose . . . making a powerful speech, . . . on the wrong side of the bill." William A. Oldfield, the whip of the House, reports Jones, "was just pulling his hair" while Cockran, "was just soaring down there." Finally Oldfield, in desperation, rose to stop Cockran; walked over to him and in a "sort of a whisper" said, "you're speaking on the wrong side." Cockran waved Oldfield away and apparently ignored him, while continuing to bellow in the same vein for about two minutes. Oldfield returned to his seat in disgust. Cockran paused and with a complete turnabout declared, "now that's what the proponents of this bill claimed, but the truth is . . . and he turned and made a speech on the other side just as good," said Jones. The House members "roared" with laughter.³²

This apparently cavalier attitude toward legislation is not reflected in Cockran's approach to important political and economic questions. For instance, his speeches concerning the 1921 Emergency bill in which Republicans attempted, by means of a higher protective tariff, to alleviate the economic distress that had hit the country,

³²Jones, "Reminiscences," II, 171-173.

indicates a consistency in his attitude against such measures.³³

The bill placed duties on twenty-eight agricultural items. It also put an embargo on German dyestuffs and chemicals. The promoters of the bill intended to prevent the dumping of foreign goods on the American market.³⁴ The House considered this tariff legislation as one of the primary reforms promised by President Harding. The Democrats, nevertheless, denounced it as a "joker," amounting to an embargo on central Europe. They insisted that the increases on farm products, many of which were already on the free list, would intensify the depression and in the end, would injure those it ostensibly hoped to benefit.³⁵ With encouragement from his fellow delegates, Cockran spoke on the emergency measure. He argued that instead of providing relief, it would actually increase the cost of living and aggravate the present distress. His criticism was in large part directed at the fact that it was hard to determine "which the emergency and which the tariff."³⁶

³³ Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, p. 22. Business in the last part of the 1920s had reached a low which had not picked up in 1921. With the parallel drop in wholesale prices, bankruptcies in business and agriculture, and unemployment amounting to 4,754,000, Congress tried to respond with the emergency tariff.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 54-55. The bill came about as a result of the farm bloc: an informal group of twenty Senators and Representatives of both parties from agricultural states of the middle-west and south. They insisted that farm relief should take priority over other subjects. The Emergency Act was to last for six months except for the dyestuffs and chemical clauses which would expire in three.

³⁵ New York Times, April 15, 1921, p. 4. Since the farmers' tariff measure had previously passed the House, but Wilson had vetoed it (during his administration), the debates, therefore, developed over the last section which provided for an adjustment of foreign money valuation. In some instances this led to a high tariff under the existing schedules.

tariff."³⁶ As in the past, when he disputed the arguments of protectionists, Cockran depicted their motives as vicious. This legislation seemed more treacherous than previous tariffs to him, because the problem confronting the United States did not concern only the distribution of profits but embraced a national economic paralysis. He accused the bill's promoters of inadvertently seeking to starve the urban population in order to protect their own selfish interests.³⁷

Attributing world economic problems to the international arms race, Cockran thought the solution would be simple. He suggested that instead of countries directing their energies toward armament, let men everywhere employ their labors toward peaceful production. With the increases in technology, even with reducing working days to six hours, workers could supply goods abundantly for everyone.³⁸ Deaf to Cockran's pleas, the members passed the tariff bill and the President signed it on May 27, 1921.³⁹

Because of the temporary nature of the new law, the Congress began to prepare for a more permanent one which would be known as

³⁶ New York Times, Cockran, Speech on the Emergency Tariff, April 14, 1922, Cockran MSS.; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), pp. 264-265.

³⁷ Cockran "Emergency Tariff," Cockran MSS. Cockran believed that the important reason for the economic distress was that the nation diverted natural resources from productive uses to wasteful ones during the recent conflict.

³⁸ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 264-66.

³⁹ Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, p. 54.

the Fordney-McCumber Tariff. Since money bills must originate in the House of Representatives, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Joseph W. Fordney, led the way in creating the new legislation.⁴⁰ Much to the dismay of the Democrats, he held secrete sessions only for the majority members. By the end of June 1921, when the Ways and Means Committee presented the new proposal to the House for debate, the Rules Committee introduced a "gag" rule limiting remarks and amendments to five minutes.⁴¹ Cockran criticized this provision as a Republican maneuver to force through their bill. He complained that the limitation on debate put the membership in a position where it had the alternative of total rejection or acceptance of all the provisions. Disagreeing with Fordney's optimism about the measure's remedial nature, Cockran maintained that the chairman would be proved a false prophet when the results would come in. He condemned any system that extended favors by taxation whether through exemptions from it or perversions to benefit favorite industries or products. Cockran tried to explode the arguments of the protectionists that a flood of imports might deprive American producers of the opportunity to dispose of their own goods in the home market. He treated them with less than respectful consideration when he reminded his colleagues that the depression had

⁴⁰ Hicks, Republican Ascendency, p. 54.

⁴¹ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 3611.

affected all countries. The level of American imports and exports were interdependent, he contended. The previous month's trade statistics had born this out by showing a decline, in the same proportions, in both categories. Emphasizing the folly of protection, Cockran declared, "I ask gentlemen on that side, how can you have imports without exports? You surely do not believe that people overseas are going to send their goods to us for nothing." He warned that without reciprocity American markets would remain overstocked and, ultimately, prices would fall to a level where profitable exchange would be impossible. To gain customers, this country's policy should promote the exchange of farm products for goods produced by foreign nations, he concluded.⁴²

While Cockran used the tariff debates as an opportunity to make his disarmament position public, the real chance for proposing his ideas on the subject came during House consideration of the Naval Appropriations bill. Prior to these debates, in December, 1920, a large naval construction program had come under attack by isolationists, particularly Senator William E. Borah of Idaho. The westerner proposed a resolution calling for a tripartite conference in which Japan, Britain

⁴² Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 3789-3792; Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, pp. 56-57. The bill passed on July 21, 1921 with a vote of 288 to 177. The Senate took longer to prepare the final bill and did not report it until April 11, 1922 with 2,082 amendments. On September 21, 1922 the Fordney-McCumber Act became law.

and the United States would discuss naval cuts. In January, 1921, he offered another resolution which would suspend naval construction for six months to permit the study of the utility of battleships as well as the requirements of a modern fighting navy. When he took office in March, Harding at first favored a big navy as authorized in the 1916 legislation and opposed the Borah resolution. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes appealed to the President to call an international conference of major powers to deal with general disarmament. Because of mounting public demands Harding reconsidered his objections and allowed Hughes to plan for such a conference.⁴³

Cockran wanted Democrats rather than Republicans to get credit for originating a disarmament policy. He tried to persuade the New York leaders to make public their disarmament proposals agreed upon at the 1920 Syracuse convention. It would be politically advantageous in the coming elections if they could prove that Harding adopted his policy from them.⁴⁴

Cockran meant this suggestion as a way for the Democrats to exert pressure on the Harding administration to institute a program that would advance a viable disarmament policy. During the Congressional debates the New York Congressman asserted that the only way

⁴³ Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968), pp. 90-92.

⁴⁴ Cockran to Commissioner ? January 22, 1921, Cockran MSS. In June, 1922, he made a similar suggestion. Cockran did not indicate the name of the Commissioner.

nations would disarm would be if the United States led the way. This country should make disarmament a condition of its aid to the war ravaged nations as well as a requirement for leniency in regard to the repayment of war debts. He recommended that America encourage peace by treating those debts as aids to the restoration of European industrial prosperity.⁴⁵ He wanted the policy however to proceed from strength. He offered a resolution which would give the President power to enlarge land and sea forces but to keep the alternative open for their reduction whenever other powers abandoned the arms race.⁴⁶ Despite what appeared to be a logical proposal, the House ignored it and passed the Naval Appropriations bill on April 28, 1921, excluding the Cockran amendment. Cockran assailed the Republicans for establishing naval supremacy while neglecting to provide for the alternative of disarmament. He said that it left the United States position unclear in regard to peace.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 806, 6695-6696; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 2132. A bill was pending in Congress which pertained to the World War Foreign Debt Commission and which authorized it to settle the Allied debt. Cockran objected to this power being given to the commission.

⁴⁶ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 618; New York Times, April 26, 1921, p. 14; Cockran to William F. McDowell, Chairman of the Speakers Bureau of the General Committee on Limitations of Armaments, December 12, 1921, Cockran MSS.

⁴⁷ Cockran to McDowell, December 12, 1921, Cockran MSS. Cockran told McDowell that he presented his resolution on April 28, 1921; Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 806.

In May, however, the Senate decided to support the Borah amendment with a vote of 74 to 0.⁴⁸ The House appropriated money for a naval conference to be held in Washington. The State Department had investigated the possibilities of an international discussion on naval quotas and prepared to accept the Borah resolution.⁴⁹ Cockran objected on the ground that the President might exceed his constitutional authority by agreements on disarmament which might circumvent Congress. To a large extent Cockran felt that Harding's efforts were doomed to failure because of the recent Wilson experience with the Versailles Treaty. While favoring disarmament, Cockran obviously did not trust international settlements which would place the United

⁴⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 92; Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, pp. 33-34; Congressional Record, '67th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 2205. The House considered an alternative resolution presented by Stephen Porter. It asked for the approval of \$100,000 for the forthcoming conference. Cockran disapproved of the Porter resolution because it vaguely called for discussions and did not face disarmament issue as squarely as the Borah amendment. The House passed the Porter proposal.

⁴⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 92; Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, pp. 33-35; Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes, II, 457-459. The British government informed Secretary of State Hughes that they were about to call a conference on Far Eastern problems. Distressed over a British attempt to increase their navy and an eventual rivalry between the United States and Japan, Hughes saw the necessity of an American participation in order to seek a limit on building ships. He also feared the Japanese-British alliance in the Far East. On July 8, 1921 Hughes told the British that the United States was ready to call a conference on the limitations for armaments. Five naval powers would be included--Japan, United States, Britain, Italy and France. Later other powers including China were added. The meeting took place on November 11, 1921.

States in a vulnerable position.⁵⁰

After the adjournment of the Washington Conference Secretary of State Hughes, in February 1922, presented the Four and Five Power Treaties to the Senate for their consent. The documents provided for naval ratios as well as pledges to respect the major powers' possessions in the Pacific. Effectively, the Five Power Treaty reduced the United States to a second rate naval nation.⁵¹

Immediately Cockran, in the House of Representatives, began his attack to defeat the administration on its disarmament policy. On February 3, 1922 he challenged the right of this government to fix the size of United States naval strength by treaty. Cockran consistently took the position that no agreements should be concluded concerning the strength of United States armed forces without the consent of

⁵⁰Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 1st Sess., p. 220; Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 2065, 4270.

⁵¹Dexter Perkins, Charles Evans Hughes and American Democratic Statesmanship (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1956), p. 100. The most dramatic aspect of the conference, writes Perkins, came with regard to the agreement on naval ratios. Hughes worked out a 5-5-3 formula giving the United States, Great Britain and Japan battleship tonnage in these proportions respectively. In order to carry out this formula, the three would have to scrap some part of their existing tonnage in vessels built or anticipated. Great Britain however would have to make the greatest sacrifice, while the United States would have to abandon its 1916 naval program; Pusey, Hughes, II, 464, 481-488. Hughes proposed a ten year holiday on the construction of capital ships. In December, the British, Japanese and Americans announced their agreement. The Five Power Naval Treaty signed in February 1922 provided roughly for 5-5-3-1.7, 1.7 with France and Italy with the smallest ratios.

Congress. In these preliminary House discussions in February Cockran introduced a resolution which would raise the constitutionality of the administration's action but he withdrew it at the suggestion of Speaker Billett to be introduced later.⁵² In April 1922 during debates over revised military appropriations (to fit the recent treaty arrangements) Cockran reintroduced his resolution questioning the right of the Executive to control the size of United States armed forces by treaty. He accused the Harding administration, particularly Hughes, of ignoring the separation of power idea and specifically of usurping the rights of Congress. Cockran argued that the Washington Conference treaties violated the original Congressional intent in sanctioning the meeting. The June 1921 resolution had merely recommended an investigation and discussion of the possibility of bringing about naval reductions. It had not sanctioned a decision which would bring about the reduction or dissolution of the American navy, declared Cockran. Not only did the treaties weaken this nation's position as a world power, he argued but they reduced the American capacity to bring about a viable disarmament

⁵²New York Times, February 3, 1922, p. 2.

policy.⁵³ The New York Times criticized Cockran's assertions about Presidential usurpation of power. The editor pointed out that Congress lacked leadership and that Harding reluctantly assumed it after the national legislators thrust it upon him. The newspaper said "Congress is almost on its knees to the President begging him to tell it what to do. Neither House has a leader." "The ship is headed for the rocks," wrote the editor.⁵⁴

Cockran could not be classified as an isolationist. For example, his recommendations for aid to the war injured nations indicate an international flavor in his views. He did not share the current national attitude on the tariff nor of those who argued against the Ship Subsidy bill pending in Congress. Foreign trade had declined after

⁵³ New York Times, April 13, 1922, p. 22. The Appropriations Sub-Committee tried to force through the House a recommendation that the enlisted personnel be reduced to 67,000 men. Big navy leaders wanted to prevent this and hoped to keep the size of force at 86,000; New York World, April 3, 1922, Cockran MSS.; Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 4270, 5411-5413. The Committee on Appropriations refused to provide the means through which military resources could be made available. The Army Department had called for a military force of 1,000,000 men. Cockran thought this force to be too small. He voted for the appropriations despite his objections because it was better than nothing; Cockran, Speech on Disarmament in the House of Representatives, December 18, 1922, Cockran MSS. This referred to the requested appropriations of \$325,000,000; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 130-136. The sum asked for led to a considerable propaganda battle. The press and peace agencies supported the treaties but the Democrats tried to embarrass the Republicans.

⁵⁴ New York Times, April 17, 1922, p. 16.

World War I. Few purchasers offered to buy the ships which had been built for the government during the war period. Maintaining the thousands of idle vessels became increasingly expensive for the Federal treasury. President Harding wrote to Frank Mondell, leader of the House Republicans, that the American merchant marine was "poorly balanced because the war construction was emergency construction, building anything and everything we could at any cost, without serious thought of its possibilities in the sea service of peace. Moreover, it is largely government-owned, operated at a loss. . . ." The President explained that in spite of every drive toward economy, "the plain, blunt truth is that government shipping has cost the treasury more than a fifty million dollars loss during the fiscal year now closing."⁵⁵

Therefore Harding requested a shipping subsidy, asking that Congress appropriate a yearly sum that would enable the government to convert its fleet into a private merchant marine available for increasing trade and national defense. While many Representatives, particularly the Western bloc, thought of this request as a means of enriching Eastern shipowners, and most Democrats argued against it, Cockran gave it moderate support. He disapproved of government

⁵⁵Harding to Frank Mondell, June 20, 1922, Cockran MSS.; Mondell was from Wyoming. Pell, "Reminiscences," I, 267.

subsidies generally but because he could not justifiably reject a measure which would promote a healthy merchant marine. He ultimately released his pair George P. Codd instructing him to vote for the measure. He was ill and resting at Sulpher Springs when the House of Representatives passed the Ship Subsidy bill by a margin of 24 votes.⁵⁶

Cockran took a more flexible attitude than conventional nationalists on the matter of allowing a continual influx of new people to enter the United States. Throughout his life he had backed a policy of unlimited immigrations. Opponents exploited the unemployment problem resulting from the post-war depression as an excuse for instituting limitations on new entrants. They argued that such a policy could greatly alleviate economic distress. Anti-alien attitudes had increased since the war. Fear of Bolshevism had contributed in large part to it. Many Americans thought it expedient to stop foreigners from coming to these shores in order to allow time for the assimilation into the life of this country of the already large numbers of immigrants. Suspicion of foreigners stemmed in part also from the wartime dissent

⁵⁶ Cockran to Baron de Cartier de Marchienese, November 22, 1922, Cockran MSS.; United States Congress, Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 3rd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), pp. 42-43; New York Times, November 23, 1922, p. 2; Codd to Cockran, November 29, 1922, Cockran MSS. The vote was 208 to 184. The Senate failed to pass it; Harding to Frank Mondell, June 20, 1922, Ibid.; Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove, p. 553.

of hyphenated Americans. The "know nothings," as Cockran referred to the American racists, held that absorption of the newcomers had become a necessity for national survival. The depression coincided with the prevailing sentiment. Even business leaders who had been favorable to liberal immigration in the past remained silent, since their traditional arguments for a large and free labor market seemed inappropriate under the prevailing unemployment conditions.⁵⁷

In Congress, Albert Johnson, chairman of the House Immigration committee, took the lead in promoting restrictive legislation. Cockran understood the fears held by those who wanted to protect America against revolutionaries but he asserted that their apprehensions had no foundation since migrants to this land could not desire to destroy the government they eagerly joined.⁵⁸ Earlier, in 1915, during the literacy test debates, Cockran had opposed restriction and had called its adherents the new "know-nothings." At the time he blamed the American Federation of Labor of agitating for limitation. Cockran charged that the politician's desire to ascertain the direction of majority public opinion often led them to mistake noisy declamations on the street

⁵⁷ Robert A. Divine, American Immigration Policy: 1924-1952 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 6-8; Cockran to N. Behar, February 9, 1915, Letterbook #24, p. 397, Cockran MSS.

⁵⁸ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 517-518; New York Times, April 22, 1921, p. 6.

corners for the silent process and deliberate conclusions of the public conscience.⁵⁹

In April 1921, John L. Bernstein, president of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society of America wrote to Cockran that his organization objected to the Johnson bill not only because of the discrimination that would result from a quota placed on future newcomers but it would break up families of those already in the United States. Husbands and wives and children who had not seen each other for years would have to remain apart for an indefinite period.⁶⁰ Appeals to Cockran to aid in modifying the pending immigration bill came from the Irish as well. In order to lessen the impact, Cockran recommended an amendment which would exempt political refugees from the prohibitory provisions of the legislation.⁶¹ He failed to get the necessary majority despite expressed sympathy for it. The Southern bloc defeated his proposal. A letter from James McGuire, an onlooker and traveling salesman in the South, explained some of the reasons to Cockran. He said that in his twenty-five years

⁵⁹ Cockran to Behar, February 9, 1915, Letterbook #24, pp. 397-398, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, January 22, 1915, p. 10. Cockran attended immigration hearings before President Wilson in Washington in 1915. The New Yorker argued against the literacy test as unconstitutional; January 23, 1915. Cockran served on the Educational Committee of the National Liberal Immigration League in New York City; Behar to Cockran, February 24, 1915, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁰ John L. Bernstein to Cockran, April 21, 1921, Cockran MSS.; Cockran to Bernstein, April 21, 1921, Ibid.

⁶¹ New York Times, April 22, 1921, p. 6.

experience in the South he found a strong anti-Irish sentiment. Religious bigotry coupled with anti-foreign attitudes could be felt among that area's population.⁶²

The Johnson bill passed the House without a roll call, Except for a few voices such as Cockran's, and spokesmen for the southeastern European immigrants, mainly Jewish leaders, the legislation went through unopposed. Robert Divine writes in, "American Immigration Policy", the silence of business interests "was a great loss to the anti-restrictionists."⁶³ The law limited immigration of aliens into the United States from May 10, 1921 to June 30, 1922 to a 3% of the number of foreign born of such nationalities as in the 1910 census,⁶⁴ Congress meant the measure to be temporary but it marked the beginning of a new policy which would run counter to that of the 19th century. Cockran never ceased to work to retain the old ideal that would keep America the haven for the oppressed. Before he died he had been preparing a new campaign to fight for the repeal of the 1921 law. He wrote, "I hope the authors of that measure are beginning now to realize the necessity of repealing it, as a first step toward restoration of industrial prosperity. I am ready and eager to expurge it from the statute books."⁶⁵ Divine says that the transformation in

⁶² James K. McGuire to Cockran, April 26, 1921, Cockran MSS.

⁶³ Divine, American Immigration, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁴ New York Times, April 23, 1921, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Cockran to Messrs. Rodgers and Hagerty, Inc., January 31, 1923, Cockran MSS.; Divine, American Immigration, p. 9.

American economic and political development set the stage for restriction. The growth of the American economy and technological changes had greatly reduced the need for the raw labor furnished by immigrants. A mature industrial system required a moderate number of trained workers rather than great masses of them.⁶⁶ Thus for this reason Cockran's economic arguments, if he had lived to debate the Immigration Act of 1924, would have been ineffectual, and outdated.

Throughout his life Cockran abhorred unwarranted governmental interference with personal behavior. In the past he had expressed this attitude in connection with political restrictions on economic practices. Only under extreme circumstances when monopolistic excesses injured the entire community did he feel legal inhibitions were valid. Under such circumstances, however, such "rules of the game" freed men rather than bound them. The Volstead Act could not be justified on such grounds. Instead it represented to Cockran a violation of democratic rights.⁶⁷ In 1921 he wrote a letter to a friend

⁶⁶Divine, American Immigration, p. 9.

⁶⁷Cockran to Robert H. Halles, Secretary of Veterans of Liberty of the United States, April 22, 1921, Cockran MSS.; New York Times, June 17, 1915, p. 5. In 1915, at the New York State Constitutional convention, Cockran had spoken of the role of government in regard to the taking of human life, for example, the death penalty for a crime. He said "the State cannot create life and what the State cannot give, the State cannot in justice take away. The supreme law of life is the preservation of life. The State is justified in taking life, only when it will tend to the saving of life." Cockran asked, "does the death penalty act as a deterrent of murder. . . ? The evidence is the other way."

about his profound anxiety concerning the implications of the prohibition law. He believed that the habits of persons residing in one State should not be regulated by residents of another. Reiterating his conception of democracy, he maintained that voters of any locality should determine their own rules of personal behavior. Moreover, he declared, no regulation of morality by government had ever worked or lasted.⁶⁸

Cockran carried his protest to Congress in August 1921 when the House attempted to tighten restrictions under the Volstead Act. He warned that attempts to remedy the ills of humanity through legislation could not work. If the State can tell a man what is best for him and his family, he declared, then it can prescribe a daily attendance at church. Angrily, he prophesied, if government is allowed to decide questions of morality then it would have to enforce its decision with the clubs of policemen. This would open the door to tyranny, he declared. The individual is the only one able to improve himself. The justification for allowing local government to legislate in such matters is predicated on the idea that localities know their own residents, as well as their limitations, best.⁶⁹ Despite his failure to arouse his colleagues, in the House, to the dangers of prohibition, Cockran never gave up trying. Less than six weeks before his death he was still

⁶⁸Cockran to Horigan, May 2, 1921, Cockran MSS.

⁶⁹Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 3124-3125.

fighting for the repeal or modification of the Volstead Act. An editorial of the Jefferson County Union, a Wisconsin newspaper, reported Cockran saying in a Congressional debate that the very idea underlying the present law was repugnant to democratic principles. He declared, "the government cannot improve men. Men must improve the government." He cautioned, "every attempt to enforce morality is attended by disorder, and there are localities in this country where the eighteenth amendment cannot be enforced."⁷⁰

While Cockran's arguments favoring immigration might appear to be outmoded nevertheless they reflected a real concern with the need to deal with increasingly complex social problems. Cockran's support of anti-lynching legislation is an example of his coming to terms with them. Since the war a great northward migration of Negroes had the economic and social consequences to them such as unemployment and crowding into slums were harsh. White controlled unions and factories denied them the opportunities they had sought. Discrimination in housing exacerbated the black man's plight. In attempting to explain the cause of their unusual mobility, Cockran said that Negroes must have left the South for reasons other than the obviousness, since they appeared to; have had better economic conditions there. The increase in lynching he concluded must have been a major

⁷⁰ Jefferson County Union, (Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin) January 19, 1923, Cockran MSS.

factor.⁷¹ When the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill came before the House, the New York Congressman said that the problem facing the United States might be defined as the need for finding a place in American political and economic life for the black man. The concern for Negro displacement did not rest only with the South but with the North as well. For the nation, Congress had the responsibility of dealing with lynching, Cockran maintained.⁷²

In 1919 James W. Johnson, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, had taken the first steps toward securing anti-lynching legislation and had succeeded in getting Representative L. C. Dyer of Missouri to introduce in the House a bill "to assure to persons within the jurisdiction of every state the equal protection of the laws, and to punish the crime of lynching." The Southern block organized an immediate campaign of defeat the proposed legislation on the ground that the Federal govern-

⁷¹Cockran to Elkins, January 13, 1915, Cockran MSS.; In 1915 Cockran had written to Abram T. Elkins that to raise the standard of living a system of old age pension would soon become a feature of the industrial practice in every country. While he denied that a State had the right to fix wage scales Cockran asserted that it had the responsibility to see that workers were protected. The State therefore must fix the standards of working conditions. Where persons lived below the standard of living and an industry could not pay a living wage, the State should supplement the wages from the public treasury. Workers who are victims of distressing circumstances but who prefer to work rather than accept welfare should be encouraged to accept assistance because it is in the interest of the State that all its citizens live according to a higher standard, Cockran maintained.

⁷²Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 1708-1710.

ment would be interfering with the States' police power.⁷³ While Cockran supported the bill, he had reservations about both its constitutionality and effectiveness. He pointed out that merely transferring jurisdiction of an offense from a State to a Federal court would help little in securing convictions for the crime. Despite his objections, however, he believed that Congress had to go on record to end this "awful crime." He thought enactment necessary not because it dealt with riots or mob violence but because lynching meant the use of methods that were "repugnant and hostile" to constitutional law.⁷⁴

To insure the passage of the measure, Cockran offered an amendment that would make its purposes clear. He suggested that the Dyer bill define lynching as subversive of the constitutionality of established government and laws of the state and as a usurpation of the highest function of its judicial and executive departments.⁷⁵ The anti-lynching bill passed the house but failed in the Senate. Many years would pass before the crusade to outlaw this crime would be effective. Nevertheless, Cockran received praise and recognition for his efforts, despite their futility. In March, H. B.

⁷³John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans (3rd ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 486-487.

⁷⁴Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 1710.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 1788.

Davis of the NAACP in Texas wrote him of his admiration and thanked him for his help in pushing the bill through the House.⁷⁶ During the 1922 fall campaign where he ran for re-election, Cockran received the endorsement of the New York NAACP.⁷⁷

Cockran's sense of justice is exemplified in his objections to governmental favors to special interest groups. During the 67th Congress, Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, asked Congress to repeal the excess profits tax which had remained on the statute books since World War I. Mellon sought a reduction of the maximum surtax from 65% to 40% with an ultimate goal of 33%. The proposal would leave unchanged the taxes on incomes below \$66,000. In order to compensate the Treasury for the losses due to his recommendation on the high bracket incomes, Mellon suggested a doubling of the taxes on documents, checks, postal cards and autos. Essentially, the Mellon program transferred the burden of taxation from the rich to the middle and lower income groups.⁷⁸

While reviewing a prepared table of tax rates which had been presented to the House, Cockran noted a great discrepancy between

⁷⁶ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess, p. 1994. The House vote was 230 yeas and 120 nays; H. B. Davis to Cockran, March 26, 1922, Cockran MSS.

⁷⁷ Walter White, Asst. Secretary of the New York NAACP to Cockran, October 14, 1922, Cockran MSS. This was a special press release in support of those nominees who voted for the Dyer bill.

⁷⁸ Hicks, Republican Ascendency, pp. 53-54.

the levels required of the wealthy as against those of moderate means. He accused the Treasury of presenting faulty evidence in justifying reductions for the upper class and charged the Republicans with granting special privilege to those who put them in office. Cockran feared above all else establishing a precedent that would give the richest people discriminatory tax advantages while all others carried full burdens. Despite opposition, Congress acceded to Mellon's request.⁷⁹ The excess profits tax disappeared, the maximum surtax was reduced fifty percent. For lower bracket taxpayers, the exemption for families with incomes of \$5,000 or less was raised from \$2,000 to \$2,500. Dependency allowances rose from \$200 to \$400.⁸⁰

As he objected to the demands of the upper classes, so too did Cockran argue against those who wished to give additional compensation to the veterans of World War I. Congress presented a bonus bill ostensibly to ease the economic distress of unemployed veterans in 1921. Despite the unpopularity of his position, Cockran remained an outspoken opponent and voted against it. He reminded the members

⁷⁹ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 5204-5205. Cockran accused the Treasury of not revealing how it arrived at its figures and the justification for the reductions. He said that the tax table prepared by Representative William Oldfield from Arkansas showed that under the proposed law a remission of \$20 would be made to the man with an income of \$70,000 a year, and a remission of \$604,720 to a person with an income of \$2,000,000.

⁸⁰ Hicks, Republican Ascendency, p. 54.

of the House that the soldiers had performed a duty and had been compensated for it. While criticized for his unpopular stand he received approbation for his courage against such odds.⁸¹ The debates were lifted from what could be considered routine, however, when Cockran accused the President of the United States for violating the rights of the House of Representatives when he appeared before the Senate in an attempt to defeat the Bonus bill.⁸²

Harding had pledged himself to balancing the budget and reducing government expenses. The demands of the veterans' organizations threatened the success of this policy. Harding felt so strongly that on July 12, 1921, he entered the Senate to argue for the defeat of the bill.⁸³ In August, when the bill was returned to the House Cockran accused the President of violating the constitutional limitations on executive power. In a fiery speech, he called upon the house to censure the President and to support a resolution for the appointment of a committee to draw up an indictment.⁸⁴ The New York Times described Cockran's dramatic finish by depicting him dropping his resolution into the bill basket and shouting to the members to resent

⁸¹James McGuire to Cockran, March 24, 1922, Cockran MSS.; H. T. Maury to Cockran, March 25, 1922, Ibid. Benjamin Hegeman to Cockran, March 26, 1922, Ibid. The bill passed with a 333 to 70 vote.

⁸²The New York Times, August 19, 1921, p. 1.

⁸³Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove, p. 460.

⁸⁴Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 5258, 6349.

the indignity placed on them by Harding.⁸⁵ Cockran, more soberly, believed that if the President had the right to address Congress separately, he could thus interfere at his own discretion in debates. Cockran, therefore proposed that the judiciary committee inquire into the limitations in regard to the Chief Executives relations with Congress.⁸⁶

Cockran received renomination for his seat in the Democratic primary against William McLaughlin in the fall of 1922.⁸⁷ After emerging the victor he had to face two opponents in the regular election-- John C. O'Connor, the Republican, and Socialist Jessie W. Hughan. With support from Negroes and labor Cockran polled a plurality of 14,705. He totaled 23,163 votes against O'Connor's 8,458 and Hughan's 1,494.⁸⁸

The Democratic party faced internal difficulties, however, in the State slate. Al Smith had decided to run again for the gubernatorial office against incumbent Nathan Miller. A number of Tammany

⁸⁵ New York Times, August 19, 1921, p. 1; August 21, 1921, p. 12. The resolution was blocked by 288 to 106 votes.

⁸⁶ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., (October 14, 1921), Cockran MSS.

⁸⁷ New York Times, August 27, 1922, II, 1.

⁸⁸ Ibid., November 8, 1922, p. 2; November 9, 1922, p. 4. Johnson to Cockran, August 14, 1922, Cockran MSS.; telegram of his renomination. Cockran was at the Eucharistic Conference in Rome during the summer; William Kehoe, secretary of the Central Trades and Labor Council of New York to Cockran, October 26, 1922, Ibid. The Council represented 750,000 trade unionists; Cockran to Baron de Cartier de Marchienese, November 29, 1922, Ibid.

members wished to nominate William Randolph Hearst for that position. Smith a long time enemy of Hearst, because of the latter's attacks on him and his administration, had the majority of delegates pledged to him at the Syracuse convention. Realizing that they could not defeat Smith, the Hearst backers decided to nominate the newspaper man for United States Senator, to run on the same ticket with Smith. James Farley in his memoirs, Behind the Ballots, describes Smith as "angered and resentful," and "determined that if he did not run himself or was defeated because of a party split, he would never consent to run on the same ticket with Hearst." Tammany outmaneuvered, then tried to persuade Smith to change his mind by sending a "constant stream of visitors to the Smith apartment," writes Farley.⁸⁹ When they all failed, Tammany sent Cockran as a last resort. Farley describes the scene vividly:

. . . the door opened and in came the portly figure of Bourke Cockran . . . who had been high in the party councils for untold years. . . . Short and rather stout, he had a heavy thatch of gray hair that gave him an impressive appearance and helped to hold the eye of his listeners. This was the last gun of the opposition. . . . He immediately launched into a stirring appeal to his small audience for party harmony . . . for the common cause.⁹⁰

Cockran spoke for several minutes "while Smith sat on the bed, arms folded and a black scowl on his face, listening intently to every word

⁸⁹ Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 30-36.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

and yet unmoved," reports Farley. Finally, Smith making no effort to conceal his "wrath and indignation" exploded in a scorching denunciation of the attacks made against him in the Hearst newspapers. Smith recounting the intense suffering they had caused his mother, finished with the determination never to consent to run with Hearst. Cockran had tried weakly to interrupt but Smith "shut him off" by saying, "I listened to what you had to say and now you listen to me." Cockran realized he could not move Smith, "shook hands amiably and then bowed himself out of the room." After closing the door he opened it again and said, "Al, I wish you to understand distinctly that I did not come here of my own volition." Farley says that this was Cockran's way of saying that Murphy had sent him and that he really admired and approved of Smith's intransigence.⁹¹ Hearst finally withdrew but was able to have named Dr. Royal S. Copeland, Health Commissioner of New York City nominated for the Senate. Both he and Smith won in the fall.⁹² The friendship of Cockran and Smith did not falter as a result of this incident.

Cockran's life ended abruptly at 7:30 in the morning of March 1, 1923. Herbert Pell says in his "Reminiscences" that the New York Congressman died "very pleasantly." Mrs. Cockran had prepared a party for him to celebrate his 69th birthday on February 28.

⁹¹ Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 36-37.

⁹² Alfred Connable and Edward Silberfarb, Tigers of Tammany, p. 306.

After friends left his Washington home, Cockran told his wife before retiring that he was the "happiest man in the world." He never woke up.⁹³ Cockran died of a brain hemorrhage. The New York Evening Sun reported that his motto had been to "live intensely and die swiftly. He did both."⁹⁴ Political parties in the House and Senate joined in paying tribute to Cockran's memory. Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr. said he was without a rival as a public speaker and had more knowledge of the history of the world than anyone in his generation. Fish declared "none . . . saw more with the eyes of the prophet or the vision of the seer. . . . He predicted events with almost uncanny or superhuman divination."⁹⁵ Uncle Joe Cannon remembered Cockran as one of the "most graceful and forceful speakers who had come to Congress in many years and Republican leader Frank Mondell paired him with Edmund Burke, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay."⁹⁶ The Foreign Relations Committees members of both Houses passed a joint resolution mourning his death. It eulogized Cockran for his "sense of public duty" and "Highest standards of legislative activities and statesmanship."⁹⁷

⁹³Evening Sun (New York) March 1, 1923, Cockran MSS.; Pell, "Reminiscences," I, 276.

⁹⁴Evening Sun (New York) March 1, 1923, Cockran MSS.

⁹⁵United States Congress, Congressional Record, 69th Cong., 1st. Sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), pp. 7806-7807.

⁹⁶New York Herald, March 2, 1923, Cockran MSS.

⁹⁷The Evening World, March 2, 1923, Cockran MSS.

Among the newspapers that appraised him, the New York Time's editor praised him for his splendid oratorical gifts which at times observed "the real and solid talent and achievements that underlay his genius." The newspaper called him a scholar and a student with clear and deep knowledge of economics and the Constitution.⁹⁸

Twelve thousand people attended his funeral at the Church of St. Jean Baptiste in New York City. Archbishop Patrick J. Hayes, Archbishop of New York, presided over the requiem mass. The Reverend John Wynne, S. J. editor of the Catholic Weekly America, delivered the eulogy. Cockran is buried in Gates of Heavy Cemetery near Mount Pleasant, New York.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ New York Times, March 2, 1923, p. 14.

⁹⁹ New York Evening Journal, March 5, 1923, p. 6.

CONCLUSION

Steeped in the laissez-faire ideology of Adam Smith, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill, Bourke Cockran considered ethics, virtue, justice, respect for God and the rights of individuals as criteria of the highest form of private and public behavior. Cockran interpreted democracy as that climate which allows each man to choose between alternatives, freely and competitively, but not to the unfair detriment of others. Although he recognized the need for reform, he rejected the demands of reformers, because their proposals violated the kind of popular sovereignty conceived by Jefferson and Lincoln. For example, he scorned civil service reform as a device of the upper-middle class to create an elitist, anglophilic administrative hierarchy. He rejected as tyrannical any proposals, such as prohibition, to regulate moral behavior.

In the sphere of economics, Cockran opposed tariffs, and the revamping of the banking and currency systems because these measures interfered with natural economic law. He denied that a government run business could allocate goods more judiciously than the private sector because he considered a publicly managed establishment as inherently inefficient and costly.

Cockran abhorred socialism because it envisioned a strong central government which he felt would endanger or usurp personal liberties. As a lawyer he viewed the courts as the ultimate protector of rights and freedom. Nevertheless he felt that judges should abstain from obstructing legislative attempts to upgrade the character of the community and the welfare of its citizens.

During Cockran's lifetime America developed many cities inhabited by a large diverse population predominantly foreign in origin. The relative increases in the 1830's of non-agricultural over agricultural production, railroad construction, labor strife, proliferating slums and rapidly growing and a heterogeneous population created increasingly complex economic and social maladjustments.¹ In this changing context appropriate precedents for urban administration left a void which the regular political parties could not fill.² The creation of local boss-controlled political machines channeled and coordinated economic and municipal services, both legitimate and otherwise. The machine sustained its control through personal help to disparate foreign groups in adapting to the new and difficult environment.³ To Cockran, as in the case of many other

¹Carl Degler, "American Political Parties and the Rise of the City: An Interpretation," The Journal of American History (June 1964), in Alexander Callow, Jr., ed., American Urban History: An Interpretive Reader with Commentaries (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 466-467.

²Ibid., p. 467.

³Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1957), in Ibid., pp. 292-296.

ambitious immigrants, the machine offered the opportunity for social and economic mobility. Tammany Hall provided Cockran with the arena for developing his natural talents in public debate and oratory, enhanced his professional opportunities and furnished an entry into national politics. While he recognized their faults and frequently attacked them, Cockran worked with the bosses as necessary political evils. Dismissing as ineffectual involvement with third parties or reform leagues, Cockran often declared that only by upgrading existing party organizations could bossism be eradicated. His one experience in joining a third party reinforced Cockran's convictions concerning their essential impotence.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, progressives had begun to look to the national and state government for economic regulation. While Cockran became more realistic about the need for public controls also, he never abandoned his conviction that strong government power, particularly presidential, offered a threat to the rights of the individual. His debates not only pointed out the dangers of business power in the form of trusts but his Congressional addresses often alluded to the Presidential usurpation of legislative rights. His increasingly pragmatic attitude became evident when he recognized that in order to be assured of economic freedom one has to turn to the State or Federal government to protect the consumer, labor or even business against abuses implicit under

laissez-faire practices.

Cockran, a man of the world, traveller in Europe, Asia and Africa mistrusted the uses of international power. He hated to see the United States lose her benign isolation when she emerged as a world power after the Spanish-American war. He considered imperialism an evil of which the destructive aspects worked as much against the aggressor as a colonial victim. Cockran thought that the expansion of the United States would destroy American credibility as a democracy. This hatred of imperialism overcame his desire for peace when he advocated McKinley's intervention in Cuba and South Africa and Wilson's in Ireland as a means to restore rationality and lift the yoke of foreign oppression from these nations. After years of agitation for peace and disarmament, in 1917 he supported United States involvement in World War I as a moral responsibility--needed to restore reason to the world. He hoped that thereby democracy could become a reality for people everywhere on the globe.

Cockran's concern for the individual did not reflect abstract sentiment alone. He worked all of his life in and out of Congress to see that a liberal immigration policy be retained in order to offer not only economic opportunity but political and religious asylum for the dispossessed of other lands. He often stood in the vanguard for the improvements of labor conditions, supporting state regulation of factory working conditions, shorter working hours and even state supplementation of wages of workers in depressed industries. He

advocated federal regulation of food and drug laws because state powers were limited and only the federal government had the power under interstate commerce to protect the welfare of the consumers. In the case of Thomas Mooney, the labor agitator who was wrongly accused of bombing a crowd of onlookers, Cockran spent the last seven years of his life without compensation in fighting for an acquittal.

Despite an involved and active life Cockran never filled the role of a prime mover. An advisor, formulator of resolutions, platforms, legislation, he was the man behind the scenes of major political decisions. As an expert on constitutional law, economic theory and corporate law, he was often called upon for advice, but did not determine the resulting policy decisions. While his most important intellectual activities belong in this realm his popularity stemmed from his role as a publicist. As perhaps the most outstanding orator of his day he was most often the keynote speaker at major events, such as political rallies, conventions, and peace crusades. His party frequently called upon Cockran to persuade an unconvinced audience, or to act as a public educator defining and explaining political policy, ideology, and motives. In a time when communication depended primarily upon books, the press or word of mouth, the oratory of Cockran filled an indispensable political role. Perhaps this is where his greatest weakness as well as his greatest strength lay. He loved the platform, the sound of his own voice

and debate for its own sake. While he always assailed power as a corrupter he savored the thrill of persuading and controlling the emotions of a large crowd and the resulting adulation. Cockran was often accused of insincerity because on his friends' or party's behalf he would speak on any subject, at any time even for causes in which he had no great interest. Frequently unprepared, Cockran told correspondents that he almost always spoke extemporaneously.

The accusations about Cockran's political opportunism point as justification to his flexibility in regard to party affiliations. On closer study, however, one finds that Cockran never stopped thinking or acting as a Democrat despite his occasional breaks with the party. Even though he campaigned for McKinley in 1896 he refused to become a Republican or to accept their patronage. When he joined the Progressive party it was in company with a great many other disillusioned insurgent politicians, the most prominent being Theodore Roosevelt. Cockran devoted enormous efforts in attempting to persuade people that the progressives were not Republicans. He distinguished himself from former Republicans who had turned Progressive by calling himself a Democratic Progressive. Moreover, if Cockran were an opportunist he would not have left the Democrats at times when he was in Congress. If he wished to become a Senator he must have known that remaining in the party would offer him the only opportunity. Cockran's independence, not his opportunism, caused his breaks with the party.

Cockran did display inconsistencies. While he supported anti-lynching legislation he believed in the inferiority of the black man. Even though for years he crusaded for self-government for the Philippines, in the end he equivocated and supported Taft's and Roosevelt's policies. While advocating international peace and disarmament he refused to support United States involvement in the League of Nations. He called for disarmament yet criticized Hughes for cooperation with other nations at the Washington Conference on naval disarmament. He argued for disarmament from strength when history demonstrated that such an approach led to war.

Cockran, the city-bred capitalist oriented machine politician, bore the typical prejudices of his time. He was not an original nor a creative thinker and he often made faulty judgments about the candidate he supported and in predicting immediate political consequences. Despite this Cockran shows some prescience. He foresaw the dangers of America's emergence as a world power. Prophetically, he predicted the reasons for the failure of the League. His pronouncements in regard to legislating moral behavior were born out in the failure of the prohibition laws. Most important, Cockran's fears concerning the centralization of federal power and its dangers to individual freedom was a warning that most nationalists of the progressive era were unwilling to entertain. Men like Cockran made up the strong, enduring and colorful fabric of American politics.

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a. Manuscripts

This essay is based primarily on the William Bourke Cockran Papers deposited at the New York Public Library. They include fifty-six boxes of general and political correspondence, speeches, legal documents, law cases, newspaper clippings, government documents, twenty two letter copybooks and three packages of miscellaneous items. The collection is invaluable to those who wish to study the Irish question, the early years of Winston Churchill or the ideas of the noted English-Canadian historian Goldwin Smith. The extensive correspondence between Cockran and Moreton Frewen, the Irish economist, is not matched by the Frewen Papers in the Library of Congress. Cockran's relations with Tammany leaders such as Richard Croker and Charles F. Murphy and his role in the activities of Tammany Hall are clearly revealed through a study of the papers. Any student of New York machine politics should refer to the Cockran Papers because of material not found in other sources not even the Edwin P. Kilroe collection in the Columbia University Library. The Kilroe Tamman-

iana is weak for the Cockran years. Most of the collection consists of newspaper clippings arranged in scrapbooks. The Cockran Papers cover the period from 1876 to 1924 and are unrestricted.

The Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft Papers in the Library of Congress were the next most helpful sources. Roosevelt's correspondence with Cockran is invaluable for Cockran's part in the Progressive Movement particularly in New York State. The Taft Papers are the major sources in regard to the United States' policy pertaining to the Philippines, particularly on the Catholic question and that of the friars' land case, in which Cockran played an important role.

Grover Cleveland's Papers in the Library of Congress add to the background of Cockran's political career during the years between 1884 and 1896. While the communication between Cockran and Cleveland is cordial the more important correspondence is between William C. Whitney and Cleveland which sheds light on Tammany's role in state and national politics. The letters between William L. Wilson and Cleveland in this collection do not offer much information.

The McKinley Papers in the Library of Congress offer some help in regard to Cockran's part in the Cuban crisis during 1897 but are largely duplicated in the Cockran manuscripts.

Of less importance were the Woodrow Wilson Papers in the Library of Congress, William F. Vilas Papers in the University of Wisconsin, the William Jennings Bryan, John Sharp Williams, Elihu Root and Oscar Straus Papers also in the Library of Congress. Despite their value to the background of Cockran's life they offer very little or no direct assistance. The most disappointing were the Wilson and Williams collections. The Wilson Papers included telegrams on the Mooney case but almost all materials were referred to the Attorney General. No direct correspondence between Wilson and Cockran appeared. A search through the Tumulty Papers by the librarians also turned up nothing. The John Sharp Williams Papers Collection had almost nothing on the years he shared in Congress with Cockran.

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1. These cover the major portion of Cockran's Congressional activities, including some of his most outstanding speeches.

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