GROESBECK'S SENATORIAL APPOINTMENT OF COUZENS TO FILL THE NEWBERRY VACANCY: A STUDY OF INDIVIDUALISM AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN MICHIGAN, 1918-1922

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By

CARL KEEN

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Science and Arts
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
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ABSTRACT

In the histories of men the following tale might be told. In 1918 Henry Ford and Truman H. Newberry waged a crucial senatorial contest. Ford urged that the United States join the League of Nations; Newberry was against it. Newberry won the election by a narrow margin, but was found guilty of violating the Corrupt Practices Act and sentenced to jail. Although freed by a Supreme Court decision, he was forced by public opinion to resign from the Senate in 1922. At this point Governor Groesbeck entered the critical spotlight. Michigan Republicans swamped him with recommendations as to whom he should appoint to fill the Newberry vacancy. Though his past politics linked him with conservative Republicanism, Groesbeck appointed the politically independent James Couzens. Michigan Republicans accepted the fait accompli with mingled feelings and Couzens became a maverick in Washington. Many of those Republicans whose advice Groesbeck had failed to heed ultimately organized themselves into a faction strong enough to drive Groesbeck from the governorship.

This story suggests several related problems. What was the nature of political behavior in Michigan? Were the Republicans united? If so, why? If not, why not? Did they have some common philosophical basis for their behavior? The central problem, moreover, clearly involves the motives of men. Why did Ford and Newberry run for the senatorship? Why did Newberry resign? Why did Groesbeck appoint Couzens? Why did Couzens accept?

The main sources for answering some of these questions are the official papers and letters of the men involved, personal interviews, periodical literature, newspapers, and books. The unpublished papers and letters of Groesbeck are indispensible; those of Osborn, Tuttle, and Sleeper are helpful. For a portrait of Groesbeck the man, personal interviews must be relied upon. Allan Nevins' Ford: the Times, the Man, the Company is outstanding on Ford and useful on Couzens. Contemporary articles also add to the picture of Couzens. Spencer Ervin's Henry Ford vs. Truman H. Newberry is highly detailed and valuable for the election contest. Newspapers, especially the Detroit News, are worth the while for added facts, and for chronology.

A consideration of the sources suggests the following generalizations with respect to the nature of the political behavior of Michigan Republicans during the birth of the Twenties. Two forces were struggling for supremacy. One was the Newberry-type of conservatism: a strong political organization backed by money; and this had connections on the national as well as on the state level. The Republican party in Michigan used the force Newberry represented as long as it was politic to do so. Henry Ford and public opinion and the party itself, in 1922, forced Newberry to resign. The other force represented the individualism of the Groesbeck-Couzens type; and this operated mainly on the state level. Groesbeck had closer party connections than Couzens. If Groesbeck entertained personal political motives for appointing Couzens, then it must be added that his belief in the

individual transcended party considerations and that his own great deeds demonstrated the response to a need for a force other than a strife-ridden one-party system. In elevating Couzens to the senatorship, Groesbeck briefly raised himself above party strife. This strife was an outgrowth of principles. "Progressivism" may be dismissed, for that term seemed to mean all things to all men. Not so with business principles. Since most of the Republicans were businessmen, the principles of individualism, of competition, and of temporary alliances for temporary gains became the themes of political behavior in Michigan, and the Republican party became a facade for this strife. Michigan's political system in the early Twenties, the echo of which may be heard today, can best be understood and evaluated by examining the characters and philosophies and deeds of individual businessmen like the Fords and the Newberrys, and like the Couzenses and the Groesbecks.

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To

John B. Harrison and Madison Kuhn

with profound respect

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Introduction

It is customary to think of the American political scene in the years after World War I as one which was dominated by the Republican party, business "interests," and isolationism with respect to world affairs. Sometimes all three are equated, along with other generalities, looking back to the return to "normalcy." But just what did the Republican party stand for during the birth of the Twenties? Moreover, how was it organized, and how did it work?

This study grew out of a desire to learn about the men who were Republicans from 1918 to 1922. It soon became apparent that this would be too broad a topic to do justice to in a Master's essay; therefore a "case study" approach was adopted. Because of the rich source material conveniently available here in Michigan, the "case" became a study of Republicans on the state level.

Since Michigan was notoriously Republican, I expected to find a strong Republican organization, backed by business wealth, which worked hand-in-glove with the tightly organized Republicans on the national level. But in this I received a semi-disappointment. It was true in the case of Truman H. Newberry's senatorial election; but false in the case of James Couzens' senatorial appointment.

Michigan's senatorship from 1918 to 1922 provided a political office which had several advantages for this study. First, it was an office which connected state and national politics. Second, it was an office which was filled by election and then by appointment. Newberry's election in 1918

was an example of an individual's making great use of party machinery. Governor Groesbeck's appointment of Couzens, on the other hand, was an excellent example of how the party tried to make use of an individual.

In treating Groesbeck's appointment of Couzens, I have dealt with an event in the lives of men who have been too long neglected. The appointment was vitally important for the political career of James Couzens. It was also a turning point in Governor Groesbeck's relationship within the Republican party. Why did the Republican Governor appoint the nominally Republican, but politically independent, James Couzens? Though I have answered a question like this, other questions raised in this essay will have to fall into the realm of the reader's judgement.

Concerning the matter of organization, this essay is arranged chronologically; but the subject demanded a peculiar type of chronology. It is not an even flow of time, but rather one that begins very loosely and generally, beginning with the birth of Couzens in 1872 and exploring the span from that date to the end of 1922. Then, in the second chapter, the time is narrowed to cover the years 1918-1922. In the third chapter the chronological tool is tightened to bring ten days (November 19-November 29)of 1922 into microscopic focus. Finally, in the epilogue, full rein is returned to time and it stretches from 1922 all the way to the death of Groesbeck in 1953.

One of my aims has been to reconstruct the history of an episode that began and ended in the darkness of corrupt

charges. Briefly, the story runs as follows. In 1918 a crucial senatorial contest was waged between Henry Ford and Truman H. Newberry. Ford urged that the United States join the League of Nations; Newberry was against it. Newberry won the election by a narrow margin, but was found guilty of violating the Corrupt Practices Act and sentenced to jail. Although freed by a Supreme Court decision, he was forced by public opinion to resign from the Senate. At this point Governor Groesbeck entered the critical spotlight. He was swamped with recommendations from Michigan Republicans as to whom he should appoint to fill the Newberry vacancy. Though his past politics linked him with conservative Republicanism, Groesbeck appointed the politically independent James Couzens. Michigan Republicans accepted the fait accompli with mingled feelings, and Couzens became a maverick in Washington. Many of those Republicans whose advice Groesbeck had failed to heed ultimately organized themselves into a political faction strong enough to drive Groesbeck from the governorship. I have tried to describe the events, especially the events in November, 1922, and I have tried to understand and explain the motives of the men involved.

Treating several minor politicians, I felt that the two principals required a background sketch. Groesbeck and Couzens, therefore, are the subjects of the first chapter, in which I adopted a method used by an ancient Greek to mingle delight with instruction.

GROESBECK AND COUZENS

Plutarch, rightly famous for his tremendous lead paragraph, in many of his Lives always catches our attention and listening powers by citing the authority or materials on which the life he is writing is based. Or he opens with a moral that sets the tone for the type of character he is portraying. To add variety to his method and understanding to his subjects, he treats us to the lights and shadows of Parallel Lives. His purpose, too, is clearly defined as "not writing histories but lives;"[1] and he plainly wants us to imitate the great man's virtues, believing that virtue--or vice--can well be shown, "not only when represented in a living example, but even in an historical description."[2] With this in mind, and believing that history, after all, is made up of human beings, I chose to include in this essay the life-histories of Alex J. Groesbeck and James Couzens.

The source materials pertaining to Couzens far outweigh those dealing with Groesbeck. Indeed, to learn of Groesbeck it is necessary to supplement the scant record by talking with the people who actually knew the man and his deeds. With Couzens, however, the printed materials are more numerous, a circumstance which is best explained by his great wealth and national position.

[1]"Alexander," Life Stories of Men Who Shaped History from Plutarch's Lives, ed. Edward E. Lindeman, (New York, 1955), p. 163--hereafter cited as Plutarch's Lives.

[2]"Pericles," Plutarch's Lives, p. 64.

Born in Canada, in 1872, James Couzens lived the greater part of his life in the States, especially in the State of Michigan. But he never forgot his youthful days in Canada, days of hardship and privation. His resentment of poverty was matched only by his bitterness of having been born outside the States. "I can never become King of England," he reproached his mother, "but if I had been born in the United States, I could be President."[3] Young Couzens plainly determined to throw off the rags of his modest beginnings and rise to the rank of wealth and position, and he proceeded to do just that. And if his family had failed to give him a better financial start in the world, he would rise on the initiative, energy, and ambition which were singularly his own. To show his resentment and independence, he dropped his middle name, Joseph, the name of his father. Alexander Joseph Groesbeck had more in common with Couzens than a middle name. Born in 1873, a year later than Couzens, Groesbeck was the son of economically modest parents, but, unlike Couzens, Groesbeck had the advantage of being born in the United States--on a farm in Warren Township, Macomb County, Michigan. And Groesbeck, who later became a better politician than Couzens, always worshipped his mother. Neither man became President, but both had the ambition and energy to combat the time and place fated for their existence. In their parallel climb to wealth and high office both used a realistic philosophy, proper to their own time, yet both had an inherent dissatisfaction which, in a sense, made them as delusional as

[3]Allan Nevins, Ford: the Man, the Times, the Company (New York, 1954), p. 243--hereafter cited as Nevins.

the 1920's which saw them at comparable heights of achievement.

The rise of Couzens reads like a tale from the Arabian Nights. His family was so poor that it could not afford to have a hanging kerosene lamp in the parlor, as did many neighbors. Young Jim organized the kids of the family and they went into the alleys, seeking, collecting, and selling old iron and scraps in order to get dimes, nickles, and pennies for a lamp fund. Jim of course acted as treasurer; and when the day finally came when he could buy a second-hand lamp, he proudly toted the trophy home. Standing on a table and a chair, he screwed the chain to the ceiling and then pulled the lamp up and down. His sister helped him light it.[4]

Couzen's father had migrated from Knightsbridge, London, to Chatham, Ontario, in 1870, changing from a grocery clerk to the owner of a small soap factory.[5] Couzens could recall in later years the long days of collecting wood ash for his father's soap, and the dreary hours he spent going through alleys trading soap for wood ash. If, in later life, his memory failed him on this score, he had only to examine his hands, for they were permanently chapped by the lye.[6]

As young Couzens disliked collecting wood ash, he expanded his activities and acquired a number of jobs. He pumped the organ in his home town church at five dollars a year. He became a street lighter after school hours. He was train newsboy

[4]Malcolm W. Bingay, Detroit Is My Own Home Town (Indianapolis, 1946), p. 116--hereafter cited as Bingay.

[5]Ray Tucker, Sons of the Wild Jackass (Boston, 1932), p. 237.

[6]Bingay, p. 116.

on the Erie & Huron Railroad, which ran between Rondeau and Sarnia, Ontario. At age twelve he got a bookkeeping job in a milling company, which he failed to keep, perhaps because of his youth. Characteristically, this failure only served to challenge and channel Couzens' fighting nature. He groomed himself, inside and outside high school, to become a successful bookkeeper, vowing to excel in the very work that spelled initial failure to him.[7]

Unable to resolve the conflict he had with his father, Couzens, approaching eighteen, went to seek fortune in Detroit.[8] He got a job paying forty dollars a month, working for the Michigan Central freight yards as a car checker. Out in the bitter cold, in the snow and sleet and rain and slush, Couzens seemed to thrive on his job. Whether a vice or a virtue, Couzens' score for cooperation with his fellow workers came as close to zero as the weather he often worked in. Retaliating, the old timers called him a bitter tongued "Canuck" and made his tasks particularly painful. But his boss, Pete Hunter, was impressed by the young Canadian's aggressiveness. He liked Couzens' capacity for hard work, his dependability, and his determination to make good. Pete Hunter soon promoted the industrious young yard hand.[9]

[7]Nevins, p. 243.

[8]Nevins (p. 243) says that Couzens went to Detroit after "clashing" with his father.

[9]Bingay, p. 118.

Alex Y. Malcolmson, who was in the coal business and had one of his offices near the Michigan Central freight yards, told Pete Hunter that a part-time job was open for a boy who would answer night calls for that office. Malcolmson would only pay two dollars a week, but the job offered an opportunity to learn office work. Anxious to make up for his earlier failure, Couzens landed the job. He also became director of the freight office. In his first position as "boss," Couzens was perfectly tactless. He was brutally frank in giving orders and seemed to consider himself the king of the realm. He was extremely unpopular. During one of his fights with a superintendent, he was told that he was no longer of any use to the freight yards. "You can't fire me!" growled Couzens, which was quite right for he was of use to the yards.[10] He let protesting shippers get away with absolutely nothing.

But Couzens was not entirely disliked. The men around him could not help holding a respect, often unexpressed, for his competence, his eagerness, and his working capacity. In any case, one could hardly fail to notice the belligerent Canadian. Malcolmson "watched the able, pugnacious clerk with a grudging admiration and concluded that so stiff and assiduous an employee would be valuable to him."[11] Malcolmson suggested that Couzens move to one of his downtown offices, and Couzens jumped at the chance. With the increase in salary he thought he could afford to marry; and in 1898 he became one with

[10]Nevins, p. 243.

[11]Nevins, p. 243.

Margaret Manning, a Catholic girl. This naturally upset the religious notions of his Presbyterian father.[12] But James and Margaret were happy and they were blessed with two sons, Homer and Frank, and a daughter, Madeleine.

In 1903 Henry Ford was able to obtain enough financial support to begin building cars for the masses. The principal support came from Alex Y. Malcolmson, who, though a born adventurer, wanted his investment watched.[13] And what better watchdog than the growling Couzens? Malcolmson sent Couzens over to the little Ford company to handle finances and bookkeeping. Malcolmson stayed with his coal business, but, as the Ford venture began to show profits, he wished that his and Couzens' positions were reversed.[14] His investment having grown to fifty per cent of the controlling stock, and believing that the future of the "auto game" lay with manufacturing expensive touring cars,[15] Malcolmson put an ultimatum to Ford: "Sell out yourself, or buy me out."[16] The Ford-Couzens alliance tightened to meet this challenge. Malcolmson demanded that Couzens return to the coal business. "I stick with Ford," snapped Couzens.[17] After all, Couzens had invested all the money he could "beg, borrow, or steal" for the Ford dream.[18]

[12]Nevins, p. 273.

[13]Bingay, p. 119.

[14]Nevins, p. 274.

[15]Nevins, p. 276.

[16]Bingay, p. 119.

[17]Bingay, p. 119.

[18]Nevins, p. 239.

He had paid $1,000 (including $100 for his sister, Rosetta) and gave a note to bring his total investment to $25,000, which was the equivalent of 25 shares. Sixteen years later this would seem picayune, for Couzens became one of the richest multi-millionaires in the country.

But Couzens had to work for the Aladdin's Lamp which the Ford Motor Company finally became. The early days were struggling ones for Ford, Couzens, the Grays, the two Dodges, and other minor stockholders. To pay off Malcolmson, for instance, Couzens went to A. A. Parker, an uncle he acquired by marriage. Parker, though a coal broker like Malcolmson, did not have enough money, but he introduced Couzens and Ford to William Livingstone, veteran banker and president of the Dime Savings Bank. Couzens endorsed Ford's note for about $75,000 and Ford returned the favor: Livingstone loaned the two men $150,000 to pay off Malcolmson.[19] Notwithstanding the large sum involved, the two notes were paid in full at the Dime Savings Bank within nine months, before their maturity date. As for the man who proved to be a pivotal point in James Couzens' rise in the business world, he lost his money backing a car of his own making. Alex Y. Malcolmson's touring cars never hit the streets.[20]

Couzens worked closely with Ford during the period from 1903 to 1915, a time when Alex J. Groesbeck practiced law, being known then by his full legal title: A. J. Groesbeck of Stellwagen and Groesbeck, Attorneys-at-Law, Dime Savings Bank,

[19]Bingay, p. 120.

[20]Bingay, p. 120.

Detroit, Michigan. It was during this period that Ford fought the Selden Patent; a time when stress and strain were the themes of the pioneer auto company. (The world was being revolutionized in Detroit.) During this time the mechanical genius, Henry Ford, was in his element supervising the actual construction and manufacture of Model Ts. Couzens applied his determination and talents to managing the company's business. Couzens supervised financing and purchasing, bookkeeping, employment, advertising and sales. For example, he was "authorized to make all contacts with the growing network of sales agencies; he was given the task of negotiating with Dodge Brothers and other parts-makers the cost of making improvements on the 1904 model."[21] He was also authorized, in 1911, to "tour the Pacific Coast, explore the opportunities in that fast growing-region, and, if he wished, lease or purchase properties needed for assembly plants, branch marketing agencies, and warehouses."[22] In 1912, as a member of E.A.D., Couzens expressed his sympathy for the employees by helping to enact Michigan's first Workmen's Compensation law.[23] Perhaps this sympathy can be traced back to his own struggles in the earlier days of the company, when he trudged "from one prospective investor to another," with little compensation for failure--except, alas, weeping.[24] But Couzens did not often weep, for he did not often really fail. He had

[21]Nevins, p. 243.

[22]Nevins, p. 502.

[23]Nevins, p. 521

[24]Nevins, p. 230.

the drive for any successful enterprise. Many factors accounted for the success of the Ford venture, not the least of which was the combination of Henry Ford and James Couzens.[25]

Tragically, this combination began to show signs of weakening from 1914 to 1919, a time when the Ford Motor Company, paradoxically, began to enjoy greater prosperity. When, in 1914, the Company expanded its attraction for the best auto workers and its publicity by announcing the five-dollar day, both Ford and Couzens wanted the credit.[26] Added to this was Couzens' disagreement with Ford's published pacifist views when World War I broke out in Europe.[27] But most significant was the fact that Ford (and to a lesser extent Couzens) emerged at this time a national figure. Ford became a household word, as people the country over amused themselves with jokes on Ford's "Tin Lizzies." Ford jokes became as numerous as Ford cars. Vaudeville stars could count on Ford gags keeping them off the hook. From this vogue the Detroit News published an article, reprinting some of the more humorous Ford stories. Humor was not one of Couzens' principal virtues. He wrote to the city editor of the News:

[25]Nevins, p. 495. It should be noted that in general Allan Nevins takes the position that the country had only one Henry Ford, but more men of Couzens' talents.

[26]Later, both claimed sole credit for the five-dollar day. Nevins, p. 539.

[27]Nevins, p. 571.

Sir:

I hereby forbid you ever again to mention the name of the Ford Motor Company in your publication.

James Couzens
General Manager[28]

Surely Couzens (capable man that he was) was intelligent enough to see that Ford jokes were good free advertisements. But, as with most human beings, he was not governed entirely by the intellect. Added to his natural dislike of seeing the Company's product ridiculed (a product that symbolized the success of his hard, determined, serious work) was Couzen's plain jealousy and resentment of what seemed all of the glory and publicity going to Henry Ford. This resentment was especially sharp, since publicity fell under Couzens' jurisdiction. To reassert his authority, if only briefly, Couzens cancelled all advertising in the News. But Ford cancelled Couzens' cancellation! The vastness of the Ford kingdom, it seemed, was not sufficiently large for the two divergent and hostile personalities.

Couzens, however, seemed to tire of the hostilities. The Company was assured of tremendous success; and there were no further major battles to be engaged in there. He had more money than he could ever spend in a rational manner. Of course he could have battled Ford for complete control of the Company, but Ford had laid his plans for that long before and had been buying up all the stockholder's shares that he could. And only a few were left in the years 1915-19. Couzens himself was the

[28]Bingay, p. 42.

last to sell, receiving Ford's check for $29,308,857.80 in 1919, which he carried around the city showing it off to friends until he realized that he was losing a fantastic interest rate by not cashing it.[29] Besides, Couzens could leave the Company because he had proven to himself that he was not a failure, though his accounting was primitive by present-day standards.[30] He looked for another kind of challenge.

For a while he was engaged in the banking business, associated with the Highland Park Bank. But there, as elsewhere, he could not conform to standard procedures and became an outcast to other Detroit bankers. Couzens swore revenge and sought another field of battle.[31]

Detroit had a thirty years war; it was a struggle over the issue of municipal ownership of the street railway system. Hazen S. Pingree, who had made a fortune in the shoe business, had launched the contest with religious zest. And, though Pingree had failed in his role as one of Michigan's first progressives, he had woken the people up to the advantages of municipal ownership. For his honesty, and for his fight against graft and the vested interests in politics, the industrious shoe-maker had become an idol of the people, standing like a giant Leprechaun over the people of Detroit. Anyone doubting the influence of Pingree can still see his statue, symbolizing

[29]Bingay, p. 124. Couzens lost about $14 a minute in interest, until he "reluctantly" put the check in the bank--see Frank R. Kent,"Couzens of Michigan," American Mercury XI (May 1927), 49.

[30]Nevins, p. 246.

[31]Bingay, p. 120.

the fame of political success. Couzens surely saw the statue, and he saw a real challenge in the municipal ownership fight. Here was a chance for him to add fame to fortune, a chance for him to rival, perhaps, Ford's growing fame. If the name Couzens would appear incongruous slapped on the radiator of a Model T, the sound of Commissioner Couzens, Mayor Couzens, or even Governor Couzens would command public respect. The stocky Canadian was ready, with the fear-inspiring tactics of a Wallenstein, to enter the political arena.

Couzens must have accepted the position as street railway commissioner with the view of becoming a political success on the municipal ownership issue. In this capacity he became familiar with the basis of the conflict, and he found that he had to wait. Besides, this was a time when greater battles were being fought. In 1916 Mayor Marx, needing public opinion in the election because of his German name, appointed James Couzens, publically connected with Ford and therefore one hundred per cent American, as police commissioner.[32] Couzens clearly saw his duty. He would run the police department just like he had run the Ford Motor Company. He promptly ordered all gambling and prostitution (those ancient callings) stopped instantly. If Henry Ford could ride Oscar II to end the Great War, so Couzens could do his part to alleviate the sufferings of humanity by cleaning up the evil in Detroit. Being held in popular esteem for his courage and sincerity, Couzens had as much of a chance to become Mayor of Detroit as Henry Ford

[32]"Mayor Couzens' Re-election," National Municipal Review, XI (January 1922), 11.

had to become United States Senator. Meeting John C. Lodge one day in 1918 in the Fort Street entrance of the Dime building, he said: "Are you going to be a candidate for Mayor?" Lodge asked why and Couzens replied: "Because...if you are not going to be a candidate I will be."[33] Lodge was not a candidate in 1918.

To kick off the campaign, Couzens got himself kicked off a street car. His managers wanted this in order to dramatize him, reflecting the spirit if not the deeds of Pingree's battle for municipal ownership.[34] But how sincere was Couzens' stand on the liberal plank of municipal ownership? Upon this question hinges an example of Couzens' contradictions. True, he had "sympathized with the workers in the famous Pullman Strike, was a single taxer 'in principle' and in general showed a bristling resentment of oppressive employers."[35] Yet Couzens in all his positions as "boss" was not beloved by the men under him. He boasted how his rough and also ready methods had carried him to the top of a business world that let only the fittest survive. Although it can be advanced that this business ethic was balanced with the idea of a stewardship of wealth, the motive and explanation of Couzens' deeds are not to be found entirely in any such double standard. For added to the climate of opinion which influenced him in this respect

[33]John C. Lodge, I Remember Detroit (Detroit, 1949) p. 100.

[34]Graeme O'Geran, A History of the Detroit Street Railway (Detroit, 1931), pp. 202-203, 87--hereafter referred to as O'Geran.

[35]Nevins, p. 243.

was his tragic conflict with Henry Ford, and with himself. Ford and most of Detroit's prominent businessmen and bankers opposed public ownership of any utilities, arguing that only experts could operate them. Couzens was an expert executive. Elected Mayor, he threw himself into the task with all the rigor of his early days with the Ford Motor Company. He worked from twelve to fourteen hours a day, sincere in his own belief that municipal ownership was a key to the successful administration of the city's government.

When the country was engrossed in the "big red scare,"[36] Couzens seemed to worry more about the red light districts in Detroit. As Mayor he still strived to rid Detroit of the infamy. He went at the matter house by house. He interviewed the women, many of whom were mothers of children, and rehabilitated some of them, availing himself of "every human agency that would help a woman make a clean start."[37] In Whitmanesque fashion he did not exclude anyone. But, as was customary with him, he warred with his co-workers. He had to dominate the entire city government, and he simply would not take defeat.

Re-elected Mayor in 1920, and again in 1922, Couzens continued to blast the privately owned and operated Detroit United Railway. Because the bonds were not ready for the people, and

[36]During this craze over a hundred Detroiters were "herded into a bull-pen measuring twenty-four by thirty feet and kept there for a week under conditions which the mayor of the city called intolerable." Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (New York, 1952), p. 51.

[37]"The Ford-Model Mayor of Detroit," Current Opinion, LXXII (March 1922), 326.

the state administration seemed to bog them down on this,[38] Couzens took the matter in hand by financing the operations to begin building public street railways out of his own pocket, hoping thereby to force the D. U. R. out of business.[39] Tactics like this endeared Couzens to the people; but he said that he regretted being popular. However that may be, the voice of the people and the tactics of Couzens finally impressed certain Detroit leaders. Henry Ford said: "You know I have never been very strong for municipal operation of anything--not as a general principle--municipal ownership of many things may be all right, but there have been instances where city administrations have failed to operate public utilities because they did not apply the sound methods used in private business. In Detroit, however, it has been different. We have been fortunate in having behind our public utilities under municipal operation good, able business men who have made a success of municipal operation."[40] Henry Ford also thought that, if private or public business succeeded, one or the other must have

[38]Couzens thought he was being bound in red tape when he received letters like this from Lansing:

"This will acknowledge the receipt by Governor Groesbeck of your letter to him with reference to the sale of bonds in your city.

We shall refer your letter to Mr. H. W. Duff, Executive Officer of the Michigan Securities Commission, and I am sure he will communicate with you relative to the status of the bonds offered for sale."

Governor Groesbeck's Secretary to Mayor James Couzens, March 20, 1922, Box 25, Groesbeck papers.

[39]"Senator James Couzens," Saturday Evening Post, April 21, 1923, p. 26.

[40]O'Geran, p. 362; Detroit News, April 16, 1922, p. 1.

the whole field; and since the people had voted again and again for public ownership, they should have the whole field in the business of operating street railways.[41]

Couzens publically stated that "to operate large enterprizes...we must draw our executives from the ranks of honestly successful business men."[42] But they must learn service first, he added, money second. Although this attitude further endeared him to the people, Couzens protested again and again his popularity. And, though he had the backing of the Detroit News in the municipal ownership conflict, the Free Press and Journal attacked him. Their criticism centered on two main themes: municipal ownership plus "the whole new regime of government, based on the principle of non-partisan, at-large elections and centralization of authority and responsibility."[43] Couzens therefore could ill afford to shun all help in his individualistic war for municipal ownership. He derived most of his assistance from Clarence E. Wilcox, "brilliant legal talent of Corporation Counsel," who defeated the best lawyers private interests were able to procure--including the then Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes.[44] "By the summer of 1922 the municipal street railway had, after thirty years war, become

[41] O'Geran, p. 362.

[42] "The Ford-Model Mayor of Detroit," Current Opinion LXXII (March 1922), 324.

[43] "Mayor Couzens' Re-election," by a Non-Partisan Voter, National Municipal Review, XI (January 1922), 11.

[44] O'Geran, p. 374.

an actuality, a going concern serving the transportation needs of a large section of the city."[45] Couzens took pride in the fact that he had done something that others, among them Hazen S. Pingree, had failed to do.

If Couzens did not consider that the Zeitgeist had not been ripe for municipal ownership in Pingree's day, then it shows that he was not a great reader of history. Indeed, Couzens read little of any type of great literature (a fascination he never seemed to have time for). Preferring to make history instead of reading it, he stood for the active rather than the contemplative life. But in 1922 Couzens had pushed municipal ownership down the throats of those business leaders who still maintained that private enterprise was the best of all possible systems.

Couzens' personal relationship with business and industrial leaders in Detroit left room for improvement. Several of these leaders gathered around his table one noon at the Detroit Athletic Club. Couzens eyed them, filled his chest with air, and said to their faces: "There isn't a man at this table that at some time or other I haven't called a son of a bitch."[46] Gestures like this made it hard for men to admire or want the friendship of Couzens. This was an outgrowth of Couzens' essential mistrust of people, with the exceptions of his family, children, and old people. He disbelieved that anyone wished to be a sincere friend, and thought that people

[45]Geran, p. 346.

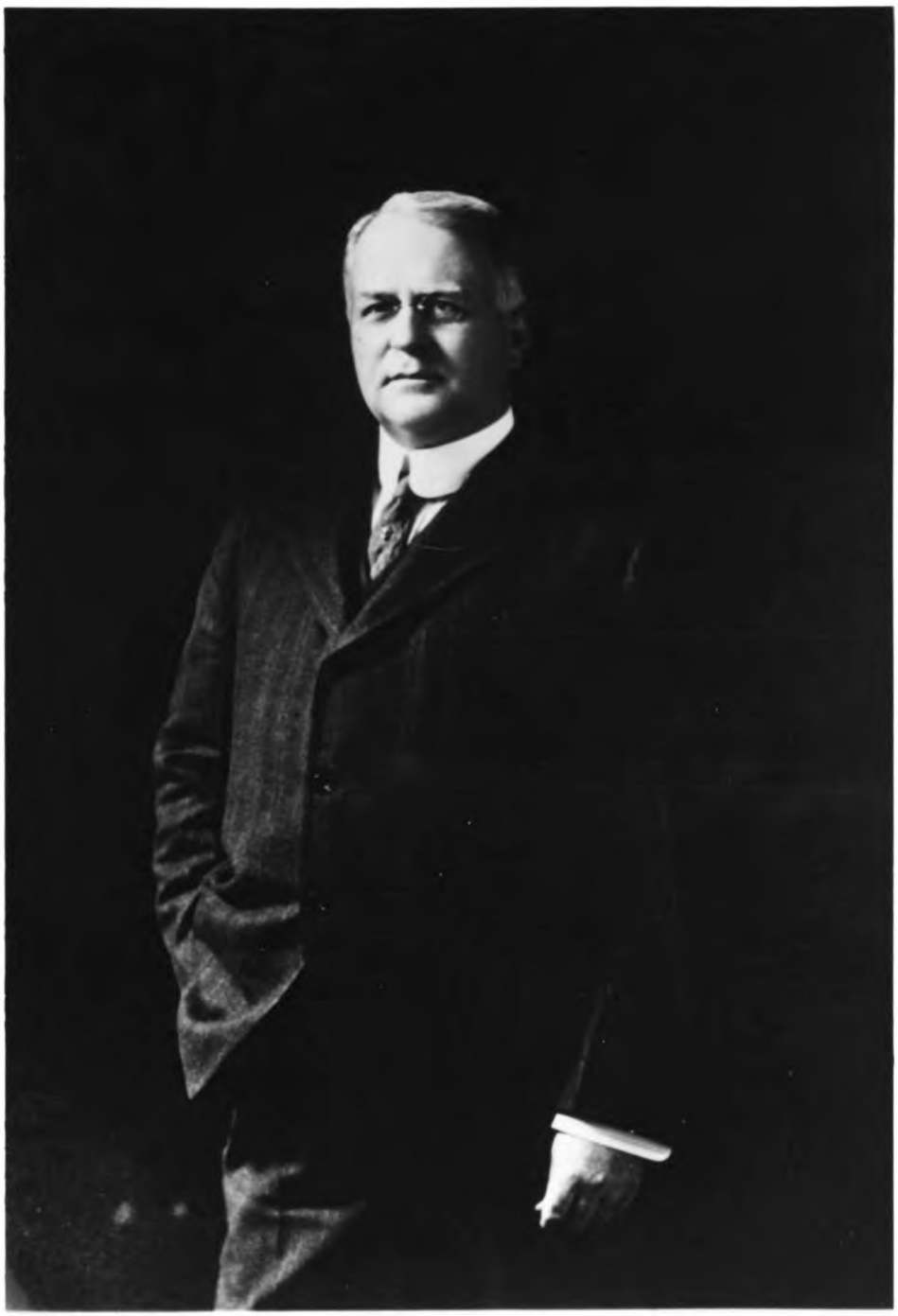
[46]Bingay, p. 118.

catered to him only because of his money. He felt that those who had as much or more wealth than he were trying to show their superiority and therefore picked quarrels with them. He could not conform. "I am the scab millionaire!" he would shout. "I'm still a poor man as far as they are concerned. The only difference is I've got as many millions as they have."[47] Yet Couzens was not happy with his millions. He looked back to the days of hardship and privation. And since it happened that Couzens was in love with his own wife, he found a measure of happiness in his home life. To his children, by whom he enjoyed being called "Daddy Jim," a better father would be hard to imagine. His family, after all, had shared in the early days of struggle. But publically, as Mayor of the fourth largest city in the United States, and with all his money, he did not consider himself a success. When asked just what he thought success was, he replied: "Peace! Contentment!"[48] The peace he sought, ironically, was found only in public wars, for he was discontented unless engaged in a bitter fight. This made James Couzens a lonely man among his fellows, a scab to be shed.

And the scars of war took their toll on the pugnacious Canadian. One operation followed another. Being a diabetic did not help his case. The hospital became a second home. He must give up the stress and strain of the mayor's office, where he was found one day lying alone unconscious on the floor. Couzens would not, however, take the count. He picked himself

[47]Bingay, p. 117.

[48]Bingay, p. 116.



James Couzens

up from the floor, as it were, and went on to meet one of the greatest challenges of his life. And the man who provided the smelling salts in 1922 was Alex J. Groesbeck, the Governor of the State of Michigan.

If ever the expression "the child is the father to the man" is true, it is true in the case of Alex J. Groesbeck. From his childhood circumstances can be derived not only the motivating drive of his life, but also the seeds of the two main branches of his life-long activities: politics and business.

Alex J. Groesbeck was, as already mentioned, born on a farm in Michigan. He was one of six children. His mother, Julia Coquillard Groesbeck, was of French ancestry. And his father, Louis, was of Dutch-French ancestry.[49] The vigorous, healthy atmosphere of the farm gave young Groesbeck a chance to see life in clean, pure and natural relationship. But there was another aspect of farm life in the 1870's. Loneliness. But the youth, like many farm boys of that time, could derive some consolation on a dreary, winter night by dreaming of the excitements of the city and the manifold activities of people dealing with people.

Groesbeck's introduction to politics can be seen in his childhood years, part of which were spent in the convenient surroundings of the county jail. Because his father had been elected sheriff of Macomb county, the whole family was permitted

[49]George N. Fuller, ed., Messages of the Governors of Michigan, IV (Lansing, 1927), 771--hereafter cited as Messages of the Governors.

to live in the jail house; and this proved beneficial to the growing Groesbeck. Like many court houses of the day, theirs was complete with a library. Remembering this in later years, Groesbeck said: "It was one of those county libraries that all minor officials have, composed of government reports, treatises on civil and criminal practices, in fact, all the dull things that are distributed free. I was a great reader..."[50] Groesbeck also kept abreast of current events in the newspapers, which he got his hands on by becoming a newsboy. Supplementing his independent reading was the common school education he received at Mt. Clemens, Michigan, and at Wallaceburg, Ontario, where he lived with his parents from 1884 to 1886.

It was during these years that Groesbeck, not yet a teenager, was introduced to the workings of business. His father opened a sawmill, but the business failed to show profit, and the family saw hard times. Young Alex, naturally disappointed with his father, got a job in another sawmill to help out. He worked in the mill from 1886 to 1890, then, to satisfy his intellectual curiosity, he became an office boy in the firm of Stevens and Merriam, Attorneys-at-Law, in Port Huron.[51] Though only an office boy, it gave him a chance to study law and "get the feel" of legal routine, an experience which paid dividends when he attended the University of Michigan in order to become a lawyer in his own right. Not having very much

[50]Frederick L. Collins, "A. J.--A Lonely Soul," Woman's Home Companion, LI (October 1924), 105--hereafter cited as Collins.

[51]Messages of the Governors, p. 771; Interview with Margaret Simmons, Detroit, August 7, 1957.

money, Groesbeck attended the University for only a year, and, though he added polish to his legal knowledge, he did not participate in the social activities on campus.[52] Moreover, he disbelieved that one had to join such cliques as fraternities in order to help his fellow man. Consequently, he suffered some abuse at the hands of those whose parents had more money than his own.[53] With his mind on his studies and political questions, he had little time to cultivate friends at Ann Arbor. In fact, he gained one life-long enemy in clashing with Arthur J. Tuttle, who later became District Judge in Detroit.[54] Groesbeck was graduated in 1893, and, after passing the bar examination, set out at the age of twenty to practice law in Detroit.

Thus, the origins of Groesbeck show that he was reared in an atmosphere of politics and business; and these two occupations were the dies that stamped his entire life.

Arriving in Detroit, Groesbeck allied himself with the Republican party, despite his Cleveland-adoring father.[55] From 1893 to 1916 he practiced law in Detroit and concurrently tried his luck in the business field. Making his first big chunk of money from investing in the building of the interurban railway between Detroit and Flint, he expanded his business connections until he ultimately became President of the Michigan

[52]Collins, p. 25; Interview with George W. Welsh, Grand Rapids, August 16, 1957--hereafter referred to as George W. Welsh interview.

[53]George W. Welsh interview.

[54]Interview with Mrs. Tuttle Bailey, Lansing, July 29, 1957.

[55]Collins, p. 25.

Life Insurance Company, the Wayne-Oakland Bank, the Monroe Paper Products Company, the Detroit Harbor Terminal, and the Stuart Foundry.[56] By the time of his governorship he was estimated to be worth at least a half of million dollars; by the time of his death, over a million.

Never caring for dancing, society, and the like, Groesbeck remained a bachelor. He used some of his money to build a huge house of dark-red brick--for himself and his sister--which still stands at 2990 East Grand Boulevard, where they lived for over fifty years. Decorating the interior in dark, solid solemnity, the mansion accorded with the appearance of its owner's character. But, thinking it unjust and perhaps unwise business to maintain such a house, which must have been empty, he invited the public to share in it: he had the mansion divided up into apartments, keeping smaller, bachelor-quarters for himself and room to care for his sister. Indeed, Groesbeck made additional money in Detroit's growing real estate, buying property whenever and wherever he could. Engrossed as he was in business and legal activities, he still had energy to burn in recreational pastimes. He was reputed to be an excellent boxer and wrestler in businessmen's athletic-club circles. And, of course, there was always the fascinating game of politics.

In 1912 the personality known as T. R. revived the principle of disorganization for the Republican party. In the Republican State Convention, meeting in Bay City to determine delegates for the coming National Convention, a regular riot

[56]Detroit Free Press, March 11, 1953, p. 5.

took place between the Roosevelt men and the Taft supporters. Those lined up on the Roosevelt side included Frank Knox, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, Truman H. Newberry, and W. D. Gordon of Midland. The Taft supporters, and a majority of those at the meeting were Taft supporters, included Paul H. King, secretary of the Committee, Robert H. Shields, Jack Cremer of Marquette, Grant Fellows, and Alex J. Groesbeck.[57] Governor Chase S. Osborn, who was sometimes a T. R. admirer,[58] was unable to attend the convention, having accidentally broken his foot; but he ordered the national guard to keep order. After the turmoil, "Grant Fellows finally called the remaining delegates to order, six delegates at large were elected and instructed for Taft, and Alex J. Groesbeck was named state chairman in place of Frank Knox."[59] The sequel to this episode is well known. At the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Roosevelt bolted and ran on a Progressive ticket. The electorate of Michigan gave T. R. a plurality of the popular vote, and the electoral vote was cast for him. This was the first time Michigan strayed from the Republican fold on the national level. The opportunity and lessons of the Bay City meeting and the following election in 1912 were not lost to Alex J. Groesbeck. As state chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, which was dominated

[57]F. Clever Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries (New York, 1954), p. 342--hereafter cited as Bald.

[58]See p. 37.

[59]Bald, p. 344.

by men of the Old Guard tradition, he increased his political activities and began questioning his own philosophy of government.[60]

In 1916, after being governed four years by Woodbridge N. Ferris, a Democrat, the Michigan electorate again succumbed to the magic of "Republican" and elected Albert E. Sleeper. On the Sleeper ticket, Groesbeck became the Attorney General of Michigan. "His tenure of four years [1917-1921] was marked with vigorous activity. Among other things he launched an investigation of prices during the World War."[61] Attorney General Groesbeck demonstrated that he was a lawyer's lawyer, a reputation which lasted from that time to the present day--and justly so for he indeed had a beautiful brain. "He could quote verbatim pages of law books!" exclaimed an admirer.[62] What Groesbeck saw as Attorney General was enough to convince him that certain reforms were necessary for the good of the state's business. Like Police Commissioner Couzens, he saw that the proper administration of government needed a strong hand.

At the Republican State Convention of 1920 Groesbeck won the nomination for Governor. He defeated such aspirants as Luren D. Dickinson , Horatio S. Earle, Cassius L. Glasgow, James Hamilton, Frederick C. Martindale, Charles S. Mott, and Frank B. Leland.[63] In the November election Groesbeck was elected

[60]Groesbeck later regretted having been a Taft man. George W. Welsh interview.

[61]Messages of the Governors, p. 771.

[62]Interview with Fred B. Perry, Lansing, August 14, 1957--hereafter referred to as Fred B. Perry interview.

[63]Messages of the Governors, p. 771.

Governor of Michigan, beating his Democratic opponent, Woodbridge N. Ferris. Sworn into office on January 1, 1921, Governor Groesbeck quickly set about to reform Sleeper's reforms and put into effect the reorganization he had been thinking about.[64]

While Attorney General, Groesbeck had seen that the various state officials were often ignorant of the activities of each other; so, as Governor, he created the State Administrative Board. This was founded upon the sound business practice of a board of directors, and Groesbeck plainly saw that government should operate in like manner. The State Administrative Board correlated the activities of the Governor, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, the Auditor General, the Attorney General, the Highway Commissioner, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.[65] This Board, moreover, had "large supervisory powers over the activities of all other state departments."[66] The Governor, however, held appointive power over all principal subordinates, and had certain veto powers over the acts of the Administrative Board. Thus, besides introducing a cooperative, "team spirit" into the state government,[67] Alex J. Groesbeck enlarged the powers of the office which was occupied by Alex J. Groesbeck.

[64]Lent D. Upson, "State Reorganization in Michigan," American Political Science Review, XV (November 1921), 580--hereafter cited as Upson. Fred B. Perry interview.

[65]Upson, p. 580.

[66]Upson, p. 580.

[67]Collins, p. 25.

Alex J. Groesbeck

Groesbeck was an energetic if domineering executive,[68] and he responded to the needs of the state. When the production of cars doubled from 1920 to 1925, Groesbeck instigated a tremendous road-building program in Michigan. "He was the master road-builder," recalled a friend. The author of the ten-foot shoulder, thick slabs of concrete (instead of gravel), and the "super highway," Groesbeck set the pattern for the nation.[69] He loved to construct projects for the public good. Nothing could stop him from that goal. Moving three cemeteries, Groesbeck was responsible for extending Woodward Avenue (highway 10) so that it connected Detroit with Pontiac.[70] Characteristically, he used one bird to move two stones: he used convict labor to build Michigan's highways. Governor Groesbeck not only did the state some service but also benefited businessmen, like Henry Ford, and they knew it.

Having thus sketched the lives of these two remarkable men up to the time of their strange connection in 1922, a comparison, though interesting in itself, will now serve as a brief summary; reserving for the conclusion of the entire essay an evaluation of their respective characters and deeds.

First, there was the chronological similarity. Groesbeck and Couzens were born only a year apart. Both grew up under similar conditions and became successful in degrees which coincided in time. While there is no evidence to suggest that the two met in the early years of their lives, both were in

[69]George W. Welsh interview.

[70]Groesbeck improved over 2,000 miles of state highways. Messages of the Governors, p. 772; Welsh interview.

Ontario from 1884 to 1886. When young Groesbeck was learning law apprenticeship style, Couzens was educating himself in the business of bookkeeping. Both responded to the call of the city, and they arrived in Detroit at about the same time. Both spent the first sixteen years of the twentieth century building up businesses and capital. Next, each gained political recognition: Groesbeck in 1912, Couzens in 1916. Both became politically prominent at about the same time: Groesbeck as Attorney General of Michigan in 1917, Couzens as Mayor of Detroit in 1919. Moreover, both asserted themselves in a new direction when they were almost the same age: when Groesbeck became Governor at the age of forty-eight, he threw to the winds any party subservience he may have had and set about to reorganize the state government the way he wished it to be. Couzens, on the other hand, severed for good his ties with the Ford Motor Company when, at the age of forty-seven, he sold his stock for nearly thirty million dollars. Mayor Couzens, like Governor Groesbeck, was a strong executive.

Economically, both were offspring of modest, if not poor, parents. Yet both became self-made wealthy men; though Couzens was the wealthier of the two. Moreover, the great wealth of Couzens was a cause for dissatisfaction; while Groesbeck never let his money interfere with happiness.

Both were very active. When Goethe said that the chief characteristic of life was Tätigkeit, he would have delighted in the pristine examples of Groesbeck and Couzens. The two chief activities which drew upon the indefinite supply of energy of the two were business and politics. Couzens was

pre-eminently the business man who got into politics for something new to do; whereas Groesbeck's political inclination was dominant, and he was, in comparison with Couzens and measured by amount of money gathered, a second-rate business figure. And, for good or ill, Groesbeck was more apt to take advantage of political opportunities; whereas Couzens was apt to pursue his own policies with mulish stubborness. Though Groesbeck was the more cooperative by nature and liked to see things work smoothly, he shared with Couzens the drive to be top man.

The physical health and appearance of the light, blue-eyed Couzens contrasted with that of the dark-complected, black-eyed Groesbeck in 1922. Despite his robust appearance, Couzens was plagued with internal troubles; he had frequent operations. If fortune and fame were rewards for hard work, so were the attacks of migraine headaches. He also had to wrestle with the problem of being a diabetic. Groesbeck, on the other side, was an aggressive picture of health, internal and external, by 1922. "He has less hair than Jack Dempsey," wrote an observer, "but many of the athlete's physical perfections. And his eyes are quite remarkable, bullety, like his head, but bright as the brightest dollars you ever saw, and fiery as the well-known coals."[71] Groesbeck kept in shape by wrestling and boxing. And if he found his recreation in the local gym, Couzens found his at home among people he could trust.

Both were lonely men, but in different ways. Couzens' public life was devoid of the intimacies of genuine friendship;

[71]Collins, p. 25.

he could confide only in his wife and children within the healthy atmosphere of the home. Groesbeck, conversely, was a born bachelor, and he seemed to live a priest-like existence with respect to females. Having friends whose homes he was often invited into as an adopted member of the family, Groesbeck took pardonable pride in the fact that he could trust the men he was publically associated with and that he was trusted in return. His family interests centered in providing a home for his unmarried sister.

These remarkable men were as necessary to each other in 1922 as darkness is to light; but the precise conditions upon which their strange connection was effected rested in the senatorial contest revolving about Truman H. Newberry, who finally resigned.

THE SENATORIAL CONTEST, 1918-1922

When James Couzens began his "one man" war against the Detroit United Railway, Alex J. Groesbeck was Attorney General of Michigan and was crystalizing his opinion that the state government needed a reorganization. And, as Couzens used his business know-how to aid the city government win its thirty-year struggle against a private business, Groesbeck used his legal and governmental skills to create a state government in the image of a private corporation.[1] Even larger issues were at stake in 1918 on the national and international levels: Woodrow Wilson and his League, Henry Cabot Lodge and isolationism. The clear call and need for party discipline after the Great War was unmistakable for both major political parties. Within this larger framework the case of the senatorial contest in Michigan gains an added significance, though plainly a drama in its own right.

Though Michigan was notorious for being a one-party state (the Republican party), the existence of factions within that party had preserved, if not the healthy spirit, then at least the skeleton of opposition. But the social unrest during World War I had brought even the politicians to ponder possible political changes and upheavals; hence, even the factions of the party in Michigan were ill-organized. To oppose President Wilson's call for a Democratic Congress, a strong Republican

[1]Interview with Fred B. Perry, Lansing, August 14, 1957.

faction had to be built up around a man specifically recruited for the purpose. To meet the challenge of the President's call, the Democratic party, which existed in Michigan in name only, had to recruit an individual who would have a chance against the Republicans.

In Michigan, one man had a chance to become United States Senator in 1918 and use his vote for Wilson's League. Although this man was a Republican for the same reason he had ears (he was born that way), he still possessed a personal history that spoke well for independent thought and action. This man was so well-known that paid publicity in a political campaign would be superfluous. Moreover, he was unreasonably popular; he was Henry Ford. Ford had liked Wilson ever since he had met him in Detroit in the fall of 1911. When approached by the pro-Wilson Scripps-McRae newspapers in 1916, Ford agreed to list publically his reasons for liking Wilson:

1. Wilson would keep the United States out of war.
2. Wilson believed in equal rights of capital and labor.
3. Wilson was opposed by Wall Street.
4. Wilson was fighting the "interests" and proved it by refusing to rush into a war with Mexico to save dollars invested by Wall Street.
5. Wilson was for the eight-hour day.
6. Wilson was against the "hot house remedy" of a tariff.
7. Wilson did not believe war brought prosperity.
8. Wilson believed there was enough material wealth in world for everyone.
9. Wilson believed that the relationship between capital and labor must be a human one.[2]

For these reasons Henry Ford, though a born Republican, would work with and for the Democratic President(even after the War). The man who reported Ford's sentiment in this connection was

[2]This list follows the one given in Milton A. McRae, Forty Years in Newspaperdom (New York, 1924), pp. 399-400.

Milton A. McRae, the newspaperman. McRae's son-in-law was William Alden Smith, Jr., the son of the United States Senator from Michigan whose term expired in 1919.

Senator Smith thought of running for re-election. He was well-to-do and owned a newspaper, the Grand Rapids Herald, which was edited at that time by Arthur H. Vandenberg. Smith, however, could not bring himself to oppose Ford or the newspapers that supported Ford. To be sure, Senator Smith was a Michigan Republican and he certainly hoped that his party could draft a prominent man for the crucial 1918 election; and he hoped for a strong organization to support that man. As it turned out, two main factions sprang up. One supported Ford. The other organization, which grew within the Republican party, was one of the strongest seen in Michigan and the man it backed waged one of the longest contests for a seat in the United States Senate in the history of American politics.

According to Spencer Ervin, who recorded this contest in great detail, Truman H. Newberry did not instigate the campaign made for him.[3] His name was mentioned as early as August, 1917, by Governor Sleeper and his staff; and in November, 1917, Newberry wrote this letter to Roger M. Andrews, one of Sleeper's staff:

Office of the Commandant
Third Naval District
280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

November 22, 1917.

Dear Mr. Andrews:

Your letter of the 17th reached me yesterday and I have

[3]Spencer Ervin, Henry Ford vs. Truman H. Newberry (New York, 1935), pp. 3-4--hereafter cited as Ervin.

read and reread it with much thoughtful interest, and with deep appreciation of the compliment conveyed by your friendly suggestion.

The opportunity to serve the State of Michigan in the Senate of the United States is one that is intensely interesting to me, and naturally attractive to anyone who is familiar with the conduct of public business in Washington. I can conceive of no higher honor and I want you to know that if I ever decide to make any public announcement, or to ask any friend to make any announcement of my position on this subject, I would certainly consult you, if possible in advance, and in any event would be most desirous of your much valued helpful opinion.

It would, I am sure, interest you to know that several months ago a friend of yours [Cady], who thought he represented the governor, called on me and stated, among other things, that the governor believed that I could be a successful candidate for the Senatorship, to succeed William Alden Smith, and further stated that the governor and his most intimate political friends would do whatever they properly could to secure this result.

I have been reliably informed within the last few days that through some misunderstanding the information I then received was subject to several modifications, and that the attitude of the governor was, as you indicate, entirely neutral.

In response to the information given me I expressed an earnest hope that I meet the gentleman interested at an early date, and somewhat later learned that the situation was so confused that, for the present at least it did not seem to be practicable. I am still hoping that the gentleman referred to above will advise me, when convenient, concerning the misunderstanding which produced the state of confusion in my mind which prevents my making an intelligent or definite answer to your suggestion.

As you probably know, I am not a politician and have devoted my life to work of various kinds, and find myself at present in the Government service without any time that I can call my own, whereby I might come to my State and talk over with those as well posted as you are the entire situation with a view of reaching a definite decision. I certainly have no desire to bring myself to the attention of anyone, as all my inclinations are to serve wherever and whenever I can.

I shall be very thankful for an opportunity to renew our personal acquaintance and to express to you in person my deep sense of obligation to you for what you have written concerning my ability and my opportunity for further public service.

I shall be grateful if you find time to keep me posted concerning developments of political events in the State, and for such further advice as you may feel like offering from time to time.

I remain with kind regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Truman H. Newberry

Mr. Roger M. Andrews,
President The Andrews Publications,
Menominee, Michigan.[4]

Wordy overtures continued until February of 1918, when Newberry decided to run for the Republican nomination. His decision was influenced by obtaining Paul H. King as campaign manager.

Paul H. King was a lawyer. He had worked himself up from a page in the Michigan House of Representatives to secretary of the Republican State Central Committee by 1910. In 1912 he had been on the Taft side at the State Convention in Bay City (while Newberry had been on the Roosevelt side). During the War he had directed the Red Cross Drive in Michigan.[5] Apparently, the differences between King and Newberry in 1912 were straightened out in 1918, after King talked with Newberry in New York and became his campaign manager.

Truman H. Newberry was a man of wealth. Born in Detroit in 1864, he had shared with his brother, John S., and with his sister, Mrs. Helen B. Joy, the inheritance of the father, also John S.--who had been a Michigan pioneer and who had accumulated a considerable fortune. After he was graduated from Yale, Truman H. Newberry moved himself from construction-gang worker to general freight and passenger agent for the Detroit, Bay City and Alpena Railroad. From this, his business connections expanded into officer, director, and stockholder of such companies

[4]Ervin, pp. 5-6.

[5]Ervin, pp. 8-9.

as "the Detroit Steel Castings, Detroit Steel and Spring, Union Trust Company of Detroit, Seamless Steel Tube, Packard Motor Car, and a large New York life insurance company....."[6] His wife was the sister of Victor Alfred Barnes, the vice-president of the American Book Company, and she was independently wealthy.

The strongest political affiliation of Truman H. Newberry was not the Republican party per se. It was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt had appointed Newberry Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1905 and Secretary in 1908. When T. R. wanted to stalk the big game in Africa, it was T. H. Newberry who donated money to help make the trip possible.[7] And when, in 1912, T. R. reentered the political jungle, he found Newberry a loyal follower in Michigan at the Bay City Convention. T. R.'s bolt has been described ably by other writers; its relevancy here is that Wilson became President and held that office when Newberry made his bid for the Senatorship; and if elected he would vote, as T. R. would vote, against Wilson's League of Nations.

To elect Newberry for this purpose, a tremendous organization came into being. The Newberry organization, as it came to be called, was the strongest political faction within the Republican party since the days of McMillan's machine, and its credo was that money could elect men. Under the sharp eye of Paul H. King, paid political campaigners organized the

[6]Ervin, pp. 7-8.

[7]Newspaper clipping (Boston Evening Transcript, February 17, 1913) found in Box E & M, B, N422, Newberry papers.

state. Some were paid directly for services rendered; others, like A. A. Templeton and F. W. Blair, were business associates of Newberry and made an investment in their candidate for isolationism. The counties of Michigan were clustered and duly organized; each county had its own set of Newberry officers--with the exception of Chippewa County, the home stamping grounds of former-Governor Chase S. Osborn.[8] Special field men concentrated on various classes--fishermen, railroad men, church men, Polish communities, soldiers and sailors, lumberjacks and Indians and Mexicans, auto workers and traveling salesmen and colored men and Masons--all were propagandized for a Newberry vote.[9] Ironically, the headquarters for these activities was the Ford Building, Detroit (though this building was controlled by the estate of one Edward Ford, not Henry).

As the campaign snowballed, the Newberry forces grew in number, and in activities. The Newberry workers had to obtain signatures on nomination petitions, make out lists of voters, contract newspaper advertising, distribute campaign buttons and literature, and hold endless meetings with influential citizens. Arthur J. Tuttle of Detroit was a good example of a Newberry backer. He was a solid, influential citizen and a conservative.[10] But Newberry also had non-supporters within the Republican party.

[8]Ervin, p. 11

[9]Ervin, p. 11; Stephen B. and Vera H. Sarasohn, Political Party Patterns in Michigan (Detroit, 1957), p. 18--hereafter cited as Sarasohn.

[10]Interview with Mrs. Tuttle Bailey, Lansing, July 29, 1957.

Besides Ford, the Newberry faction had others to contend with. From March to June, 1918, rumors were in the air as to the possible candidacy of William Alden Smith, William G. Simpson, Fred Warner, James Couzens, and Chase S. Osborn. Senator Smith finally decided to go along with his newspaper friends who supported Ford, and therefore did not run for re-election himself. Couzens had his hands full in Detroit at the time and Warner finally declined to run, perhaps because Ford's hat was in the ring.[11] Simpson, who had magnificent visions of political power, stayed in the race, as did Chase S. Osborn. That any of the candidates in this fantastic contest held a regard for the party per se can be seen from a slice of Chase Osborn's career. Consider his peregrinations among the 1912 candidates for the presidency. "In November, 1911, he endorsed Taft for re-election, but in January, 1912, he urged both Taft and La Follette to withdraw in favor of Roosevelt or Beveridge. In February, he joined six other governors in issuing the call to Roosevelt, but in June, after the nomination of Taft, he announced his intention of voting for Wilson. In July, he asserted that the progressive movement could best attain its goals within the Republican party, but in August he declared his support of Roosevelt. He never joined the National Progressive Party."[12] Osborn was still an independent in 1918, and only those who knew the 'man' could vote intelligently for him; a party label did not identify

[11]Ervin, p. 18.

[12]Sarasohn, p. 18.

what he stood for.

Henry Ford, however, provided the biggest mockery to party structure in Michigan. He ran in both the Republican and Democratic primaries. Although he had President Wilson's endorsement, Ford was not the unanimous choice of the Democratic party; he was opposed in the Democratic primary by James W. Helme. Ford was not without support on the Republican side. Attorney General Alex J. Groesbeck "came out for Ford June 17, three days after the announcement of Ford's candidacy. Apparently he took part in the attack made just before the primary upon the expenditures of the Newberry Committee."[13]

The Escanaba Journal began the attack upon the Newberry Committee with two slashing editorials on August 2, 1918. One accused the Newberry campaign of "being made a money campaign which outclasses the money barrel campaigns of 20 and 30 years ago," and if continued, "it will create a condition which must evitably [sic] mean the debauchery of Michigan politics."[14] Besides, the other editorial stated, the Democrats would have no trouble proving illegal use of money, and therefore no trouble depriving Newberry of his seat if he was elected. Concurrently, the Charlotte Republican sallied forth with this studied comment: "the Newberry organization has seemingly dismissed all semblance of ethics and common sense in hiding the fact that theirs is a simon pure and simple money campaign."[15]

[13]Ervin, p. 303; New York Times, June 18, 1918, p. 8.

[14]Ervin, p. 19.

[15]Ervin, p. 19.

The next paper to charge Newberry with corrupt practices was the Grand Rapids Herald, edited by Arthur H. Vandenberg. Vandenberg himself had senatorial aspirations, but he could go nowhere without the backing of the Herald's owner, William Alden Smith. Smith stayed in the primary field until the last day before nomination petitions were due, and then devoted himself to anti-Newberryism. These charges of illegality were based upon the Corrupt Practices Act of 1911, which set a limit to the amount of money a candidate could spend in election campaigns. (The Act was not clear as to whether it covered the primary.) In the case of a senatorial aspirant, the maximum was $3,750 or one half of a senator's salary for one year. The Newberry Committee defended their candidate on the grounds that he was in New York and did not contribute any money for the campaign; and there was no law against friends donating time and money.

The time came for the primary on August 27, 1918, and Truman H. Newberry won on the Republican ballot over Ford, Osborn, and Simpson. Ford beat Helme in the Democratic primary.

On September 1 Osborn sent Newberry a telegram warmly congratulating him for his victory, but by September 17 Osborn advised Newberry that he should admit breaking the law. Since the maximum limit for senatorial campaigns was prescribed by law at $3,750, it was therefore wholly illegal for Newberry to spend $176,568.08. This was the amount Newberry invested to secure the Republican nomination, a nomination which had been traditionally tantamount to election. The Newberry

organization "broke up" after reporting this amount; and the Republican State Central Committee took over its headquarters.[16]

The election campaign between Newberry and Ford was a vicious one. From September to November, 1918, Ford continued charging Newberry with corrupt practices. It made little difference to the Ford forces whether Truman H. or John S. Newberry spent the money, for the brothers Newberry had a joint bank account to be drawn upon with or without the consultation of each other. This delicate point was explored later at the Grand Rapids trial. Meanwhile, Newberry supporters were not without a counter-attack. Any amount of money would be justified in keeping Ford out of the Senate because Ford was not only one of the richest and best advertised men in the country but he would vote for Wilson's League; besides, Ford had held unpatriotic views during the War. On this score the Newberryites held an emotional card in the election campaign. Taking little account that Henry Ford's son, Edsel, might have been of greater service to his country staying in Detroit and working in the Ford Company, rather than enlisting as a soldier, the Newberryites distributed throughout the state single-starred posters on which the single line appeared: "Nothing like this in Henry Ford's window."[17] Newberry's patriotism, on the other hand, could not be questioned. He had two sons in military service and was himself prominently associated with the Navy.

As the campaign rolled on, Newberry saw that the Republican

[16]Ervin, p. 25.

[17]Campaign poster found in Box E & M, B, N423, Newberry papers.

party was not solidly behind him. For example, William G. Simpson, defeated in the primary, wrote a letter which was published in the Detroit News on October 6, 1918. The letter denounced the Newberry campaign expenditures. Luren D. Dickenson, the Republican Lieutenant Governor of Michigan, also attacked Newberryism on the matter of money.

However that may be, when election day came in November, Newberry received 220,054 votes to Henry Ford's 212,487.

Soon thereafter, on November 15, Ford publically stated that he would ask for a recount--because the Wall Street interests were closing in on the President. "If they [Newberryites] would spend $176,000 for one little nomination," Ford said, "they would spend $176,000,000 to clean up the country. That is where our danger lies: that is what makes for Bolshevism."[18]

Charges of corrupt practices were brought before the Senate which was in session from December 2, 1918 to March 4, 1919. They lingered there, obstructed by such Senators as Henry Cabot Lodge, who was quite pleased in having Newberry's vote against President Wilson.[19] They were matched by counter-charges, on January 27, 1919, to the effect that Ford had also spent much money, about $90,000, in the campaign.[20] Ford's counsel sharply replied:

[18]New York Times, November 16, 1918, p. 9. The non-partisan Ford-for-Senator club also requested a legal investigation of the Newberry expenditures; see Ervin, p. 29.

[19]For Lodge's coy defense of Newberry see the Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 57, part 3, p. 2818.

[20]Ervin, p. 33.

I beg to say, in as emphatic language as parliamentary rules will permit, that these charges and insinuations are wholly false, and they only furnish additional reasons why an immediate investigation should be ordered, which Mr. Ford has been asking for ever since the primary, and which has been opposed by Mr. Newberry and his representatives from that time until this.

No money or other thing of value was expended by Mr. Ford either in primary or election, and no moneys were expended in his behalf in the primary. The expenditures made in the election were made by the non-partisan Ford-for-Senator committee and by the Democratic State central committee, both of which committees have reported in utmost detail, under the oaths of their respective treasurers, their expenditures, which were all lawful disbursements.[21]

All through February, 1919, Senators debated whether it was parliamentary procedure to vote on the Newberry case. The Department of Justice, and Ford agents too, continued to dig, as they had since the primary, for evidence against Newberry. When, on March 4, the Sixty-fifth Congress expired, Truman H. Newberry was slated for a seat on the in-coming Senate, "it being apparently conceded that objection...was not proper parliamentary procedure."[22]

In the Senate's first session of the Sixty-sixth Congress the Republicans--all of them, including the progressives and Newberry--had 49 seats to the Democrats 47. "If Ford had won," said later speculators, "there would have been 48 Republicans and 48 Democrats. The Vice-President, a Democrat, would have cast his vote with the Democrats, the Foreign Relations Committee would have contained a majority of Democrats and would

[21]Ervin, p. 34.

[22]Newberry's credentials of election were presented on March 3 and they were not contested on that date or on March 4, when the Congress expired; see Ervin, p. 39. Apparently, Newberry was innocent (and therefore entitled to his seat) until proven guilty.

have had a Democratic chairman. By such small margins is the course of history changed."[23] The Republicans, however, were able to organize themselves, under the leadership of Lodge, for the crucial struggle over the League of Nations.

While this struggle was taking place, a Federal Grand Jury was organized back in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and on November 29, 1919, Truman H. Newberry and 134 others were indicted for violation of the Corrupt Practices Act. Charges were filed, evidence presented, and theories of justice expounded, as the trial at Grand Rapids lasted from November 29, 1919, to March 20, 1920.

All this time Newberry occupied a seat in the United States Senate. His whole attitude was that of the typical businessman's double standard of values: it was "right" for a businessman to make money by almost any means if he used that money in such a way as to be beneficial to society. "This businessman's double standard served to distinguish them from other criminals," a later scholar criticized.[24] From Newberry's viewpoint, therefore, the means of his gaining the Senatorship did not really matter if he used his gained position to be of help or service to America. His definition of "service" consisted, of course, in keeping America isolated so it could get back to normal business; and Newberry did his duty by casting a vote against America's joining the League.

[23]Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1955), p. 670; D. F. Fleming, The United States and the League of Nations, 1918-1920 (New York, 1932), p. 401 n.

[24]Lecture by Dr. Philip Mason of the Michigan Historical Commission, Lansing, December 5, 1956.

When the trial ended in Grand Rapids--after the chief evidence for the prosecution had been presented by the defense!--the jury of ten Republicans and two of uncertain political creed brought in a verdict of guilty.[25] Truman H. Newberry (along with Paul H. King and Frederick Cody) was sentenced to serve two years in Leavenworth Penitentiary and to pay a fine of $10,000. The decision was appealed of course to the United States Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the Senate held hearings on the matter of recounting the votes; but here, too, justice moved slowly. "In fact, it seems to have taken from March 23, 1920, to January 4, 1921, to get the ballots to Washington and be ready to begin the recount."[26] By February the recount was finished, however, and the results only showed a reduction of Newberry's plurality from 7,567 to 4,334.[27] Even better news for Newberry came from the Supreme Court, for in May, 1921, it was decided by a vote of 5-4 that the Federal Corrupt Practices Act was unconstitutional with respect to the nomination of individuals in the primary election.[28] Henry Ford did not let the verdict rest; on May 19, 1921, he sent the following telegram to each member of the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the new Senate:

> A press despatch states that the Committee on Elections will meet tomorrow to decide upon the contention of Senator Newberry's friends that the Ford-Newberry investigation should

[25]Ervin, pp. 52,56.

[26]Ervin, p. 60.

[27]Ervin, p. 66.

[28]Ervin, p. 68.

be dropped and no evidence taken. I find it impossible to believe that honorable Senators shall even seriously entertain such a proposal. The gravest charges of fraudulent expenditures of vast sums to accomplish an election are made. One jury, acting on only a part of the evidence, has found these charges true. The Supreme Court declared the proper place to investigate these charges is the United States Senate.

I had no control over the criminal proceedings and considerable evidence of great force was not introduced. I respectfully petition, as I have for two years past, that the evidence be taken and my contest heard in the usual and orderly manner which every citizen is supposed to be entitled to as a matter of right.

The honor of the United States Senate is involved. I know that honor is in your keeping and not in mine, but I am an American citizen and, with the profoundest respect for your honorable body, permit me to say that I personally care little or nothing for the seat for myself, but I press my rights and insist upon the investigation, in order to have it forever established that a seat in the United States Senate may not be purchased and that seats are not for sale to the highest bidders.[29]

The Harding sweep of 1920 had increased the Republican's plurality in the Senate to 24. This Republican Senate took up Ford's plea and debated it until mid-January, 1922. Then a strictly partisan vote gave Newberry a right to his seat--but only until the next congressional elections.

From January to November, 1922, Truman H. Newberry was one of the two official Senators from Michigan. He fought long and hard defending his right to the seat, and the principles for which he stood. Standing beside him was the other Senator from Michigan, Charles Townsend, who had to be re-elected in 1922 in order to remain a Senator. Though Newberry's term normally would have lasted until 1924, he, because of the faction within the Republican party for which he stood, was as much up for re-election in 1922 as his colleague. The political happenings in 1922 also show a definite turning point:

[29]Ervin, p. 70.

whether the party would stand as a body of organized opinion or disintegrate into the political unpredictables or individual personalities.

Anticipating that the Ford attacks upon Newberryism would result in a senatorial vacancy, William G. Simpson, who had presidential visions and stationery advertising that fact, wrote Governor Groesbeck as early as January 31, 1922, asking for a senatorial appointment (which Simpson believed would be a good presidential stepping stone). "This appointment is, of course contigent upon the expected resignation of Newberry. However, it dont [sic] seem possible to me that he can continue so brazen or so stupid as NOT to resign before long."[30] But Newberry did continue to withstand the Ford onslaught; and he was not without supporters. A friend wrote from Chicago:

> My spirited defense of Senator Newberry was because I had from the beginning of the trial at Grand Rapids, certain exclusive knowledge of the combination which was against him. It included two rival aspirants, a sympathetic Judge, the whole power of the Opposition Department of Justice, added to Henry Ford's perfectly equipped and far reaching Politico-Commercial-Machine Organization....
>
> I roundly crticised [sic] the Pharasoical criticism such as was uttered by Republicans like Kenyon, just as I had criticised those Democrats who with stock hypocrisy bewailed the use of $195,000. I wrote them, and repeat here, that any honest means was justified in keeping Ford out of the Senate, both on account of his (commercially profitable) International bunk peace pronouncements and because of his Unamericanism and generally bad example. Like the bad example of Jay Gould, Jim Fisk and other successful gigantic adventurers of a past generation, the quickly acquired unnaturally tremendous wealth of Henry Ford makes him not only a bad example, but dangerously disorganizing influence especially in politics....
>
> I repeat that any amount of money was justified, to keep Ford out of the Senate....
>
> The Senate having voted on the question and in Newberry's

[30]William G. Simpson to Alex J. Groesbeck, January 31, 1922, Box 20-23, Groesbeck papers.

favor, the matter should have rested there and I think he should have been immune from partisan attack. As to the Willis amendment, it was idiotic, whoever suggested it, whether President or some alleged Leader. It was hypocritical as were the attacks of those who were shocked by the use of so much money. It was as hypocritical as was Kenyon and every Republican and Democrat who sympathised with Kenyon's attack....

The Willis amendment was the epitome and acme of "smartalecism". It was a case of "doth protest too much". If I had been Newberry, I would have utterly repudiated such a defense, which, "damns with faint praise". All this Tommy Rot on both sides was for rural home consumption and you know it. It fools no one with sense. And, now, Thank God, is the time when the Goody-Goody, Small-Town, Hypocritical Political Fakers must tumble.[31]

If Ford was a disorganizing influence in politics, so was the Newberryism; for the Newberry issue was not only an occasion for partisan attack by the Democrats on one hand and by Progressives of the La Follette brand on the other, but also an occasion for the Republican party in Michigan to test whether Newberryism would act successfully as a matrix of multipartite opinion. To see how Newberry fared after four years, it is necessary to examine in some detail the campaign of 1922.

For the Governorship Alex J. Groesbeck was up for reelection in 1922, and, since he was quite popular, he did not find it necessary to work closely with the Republican State Central Committee. When the treasurer of the Committee, Fred W. Green, wrote Groesbeck letters asking for his $500 contribution to pay for contracted campaign bills, the Governor did not even answer.[32] The Governor's attitude in this respect is evidenced also by the relationship between Groesbeck and

[31]William F. Brewster to Senator James A. Reed, February 14, 1922, Box E & M, B, N423, Newberry papers.

[32]Fred W. Green to Alex J. Groesbeck, October 30 and November 6, 1922, Box 12a-15, Groesbeck papers.

the chairman of the Committee, Burt D. Cady. Cady in his position as chairman had been helpful to the political fortunes of former businessman and Governor Albert E. Sleeper;[33] but now, after Sleeper and Groesbeck had become political enemies,[34] Cady tried to get Groesbeck to stand for Newberryism by lending his popular personality to Townsend's cause. Cady wrote the following letter to Major Rolph Duff, Groesbeck's executive secretary:

Dear Rolph:--

Your letter under date of October 12th received. Senator Hiram Johnson is in California. It is simply impossible for us to get him for any Michigan meetings. We are going to arrange a large meeting for Senator Townsend and I wish that Governor Groesbeck could arrange to be there at the same time. I wish you would take this up with him and let me hear from you.

.....

With kindest regards, I remain
Very truly yours,

Burt D. Cady[35]

But Governor Groesbeck did not lend any support to Townsend, a fact that Townsend complained about after the election.[36] Either Groesbeck believed it impolitic to be identified with the Newberry issue (to do so might mean losing the support of party organization), or he had definitely made up his mind to be as independent as Hiram Johnson. But if Groesbeck was independent, he still wore the Republican label and made use of

[33]Ervin, p. 275.

[34]See the unpubl. thesis (Box "Sleeper's personal papers," by Mildred K. Eccles, "Albert E. Sleeper," pp. 139,141; and see the Detroit News, September 24, 1920, p. 1.

[35]Burt D. Cady to Major Rolph Duff, October 13, 1922, Box 12a-15, Groesbeck papers.

[36]Detroit Free Press, December 4, 1922, p. 2.

information gathered by party workers. The following was found among his official papers:

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT MADE BY F. S. HOGAN
TO CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
PERTAINING TO THE DETROIT SITUATION
DATED OCTOBER 10- 1922.

During the past week I visited several hundred houses in the line of work and talked with many women. I also met men at their homes and conversed with them on the street, also met business men. This was in the southeastern section of the city and largely among people employed in offices, factories drivers, street laborers and those engaged in practically all kinds of work. My business has been such that it was possible for me to induce a brief talk on the political situation, without seeming to make a point of it at all and thus secure some idea of the feeling of the people with whom I was dealing.

I did not find an unusual interest manifested. As a general thing, candidates were not materially considered or often spoken of and party interest or enthusiasm seemed to be more than usually lacking.

Some said they had not thought much about it, others said "What difference does it make anyway which party wins, this high cost of living will continue and we'll have to pay out every cent we can make to exist".

Nearly everyone had a club for profiteers and only want to know how they can best get at them. This I have found to be the uppermost thought and desire in the minds of those I talked with.

Fears for the coming winter were generally expressed. This was especially noticed among housewives. "If I can find out which party will give us cheaper coal and food, I'll know how to vote", said one woman "and I expect to vote too".

One woman living on Field Avenue near East Mack had no objection to talking politics and I imagine she could make a rattling campaigne [sic] speech. She was bitter against the Republican party, which she blamed for high prices and everything that has recently operated against the working men. "And I was born a Republican and have always been a Republican", she said "but they are all crooked from the top down. No sir, I'll not vote that way again, neither will my man. I am going to talk to other women too. The Republicans promised us cheaper living, what have they done? My husband can hardly earn enough to keep us from starving and I don't see how we can keep from freezing next winter. And the gouging landlords raising rents, I guess they are all Republicans too".

I would not be surprized if this woman did make at least a neighborhood campaigne [sic].

I found no Ferris sentiment--in fact few seemed to know

anyone by that name. There were, however a few exceptions among schoolteachers I talked with, especially the women teachers. This sentiment prevailed quite extensively in Wilson's favor during his first presidential campaigne [sic] and was handed out to students by teachers in large doses as regular daily instruction.

I heard many favorable opinions expressed concerning Senator Townsend. It is only necessary to get among the people to learn that the so-called "Newberry Issue" has not a place in their thoughts. They never refer to it, apparently everyone who has ever considered it all forgot all about it long ago and now would not waste the time to read or listen to anything concerning it.

It would seem to me about the proper thing if the Democrats can be induced to spread themselves on that theme as their main issue, I am convinced nothing will put the voters to sleep more speedily so far as their candidates are concerned, than for them to keep that ball rolling.

In talking with a city fireman he said, "People are not talking much about politics but I guess they are doing a lot of thinking and they will be out to vote".

About the only thing I hear talked now is how much everything costs and of course somebody will be held responsible for it.

(Signed) F. S. Hogan.[37]

This report seems to be a fair sample of the party's thinking on the coming November election. But the results of the election did not bear this thinking out. The electorate voiced disapproval of Newberryism by electing Woodbridge N. Ferris--the first Democratic United States Senator from Michigan since 1854! Townsend and other Newberry supporters were stunned by their defeat. Arthur J. Tuttle consoled Townsend by saying that the latter's defeat was not due to Newberryism or the wet and dry issue "but in reality it is a wave of reaction sweeping the country." Tuttle continued: "November 7, 1922, came at the very crest of a wave of reaction against the Republican national organization and the present administration

[37]Box 12a-15, Groesbeck papers.

....public sentiment has turned against the party in power and undoubtedly that thing will continue to happen so long as government by the people exists." Furthermore, said Tuttle, the defeat could be attributed to the very nature of the primary system, under which "the party in power will frequently have bitter fights....with the resulting defeat in election."[38] This last point of Tuttle's is interesting, if half-truth, for he (and Townsend too) had helped produce that system.

In the 1922 election the people of Michigan turned from voting strictly on party lines to selection on an individualistic basis. It is reasonably clear that Newberryism split the Republicans on the state level. This added to individualism in Michigan politics. Groesbeck was not wholly against Townsend and Newberry in 1922; nationally, he had supported Senator Townsend in such matters as the Senator's joint resolution in Congress to provide for the equal distribution of war surplus supplies, valued at a billion dollars, to the states.[39] It should be said, however, that this was also an example of Groesbeck's state isolationism, for he cooperated best with the Federal Government when the state stood a chance to derive benefit therefrom. But Governor Groesbeck, as already noted, did not support Townsend on the state level. A study of developments in the state reveals just how Groesbeck lined up with those who supported Newberry and those who did not.

[38]Arthur J. Tuttle to Charles Townsend, November 10, 1922, vol. 51, Tuttle letters.

[39]Groesbeck's correspondence to other state governors in the summer of 1922, Box 16-18, Groesbeck papers.

The relationship between Groesbeck, Merlin Wiley, and Chase Osborn indicates the discord nurtured by the Newberry issue. Consider first Wiley's association with Osborn: he was Osborn's campaign manager and long-time friend in the Upper Peninsula, and both men were against Newberryism. Now add the fact that Osborn and Groesbeck were political foes. Finally, consider that Wiley was Groesbeck's Attorney General. It is small wonder that the press used the Newberry issue to exact a definition of the relationship between Wiley and Groesbeck. Groesbeck wrote to the Editor of the Sault Ste. Marie Evening News:

Dear Sir:

In your issue of June 19, 1922, there appears an article on the "Newberry Issue" which contains the statement that I have rebuked the Attorney General, Mr. Wiley, on two occasions when opinion from him did not coincide with my legal views.

This statement conveys a wrong impression and should be corrected. My official relations with Mr. Wiley have been most friendly. We have never had any disagreements worth talking about on legal questions. His activities have been in the interest of the state throughout the trying period of placing state business upon a legitimate and efficient basis. The statement that I have refused to accept the Attorney General's opinions is erroneous; the further statement that I have rebuked him is preposterous.

I am not concerned with the political aspects of the article in question as I concede everyone a right to his own views on political subjects and questions.

Yours very sincerely,

Alex J. Groesbeck[40]

A carbon of this letter was sent to Wiley for reassurance of Groesbeck support in the Upper Peninsula. The month before

[40]Alex J. Groesbeck to the Editor of the Sault Ste. Marie Evening News, June 22, 1922, Box 12a-15, Groesbeck papers.

Groesbeck sent this letter identifying himself with anti-Newberryism, which would be consistent with his Ford pronouncement in 1918, he received the following letter from W. H. Wallace of Saginaw:

Dear Governor Groesbeck:

I note that you are slated to be in Saginaw on the evening of Tuesday, May 16th. I will be glad to have you call me up when you arrive in town and will have a good comfortable bed for you and housing for your machine if you have one with you, so will expect you to stay with us all night.

With regards and best wishes,
Yours very truly,

W. H. Wallace[41]

W. H. Wallace was a conservative and solid backer of Joseph Fordney (of Fordney-McCumber tariff notoriety), who was in turn a strong Newberry defender. Wallace surely would have liked to draw Groesbeck into the Newberry sphere before the election, but Groesbeck would not be persuaded; and Groesbeck was re-elected.

Even after the election the Newberryites continued to try their influence on the Governor. Wallace wrote a few days after the election:

Dear Governor Groesbeck:

I have heard from several sources that there is no possible question about Newberry's resigning. The chances are if he does not they will put him out. You will probably remember our talk about this.

I would suggest that if he does resign, Joe Fordney be given the appointment, of course with the proper understanding. I don't think it has been mentioned to him, but I think he would. He could go down there, put on the yoke, get into place and go right to work, and be very useful in the next two years, which will undoubtedly be troublesome. There is

[41]W. H. Wallace to Alex J. Groesbeck, May 10, 1922, Box 16-18, Groesbeck papers.

no possibility of his wanting it any longer than the two years because he wants to retire. He has bought two farms and is settling down to the life of a country gentleman.

It would be a practical appointment and I am satisfied would meet the approval of all the Republicans in Michigan, except someone who might want it himself. To send a new man or a young man down there would be a waste of time and money, because he would just begin to get his hand in at the end of two years when he would be called out. If you conclude to run at that time there is no question in my mind about your election.

Of course you know I am pleased over the result of our last election. I am sorry we lost Townsend, but I have so much to be thankful for that I should not complain. I hope you will have a pleasant and successful administration, and I am willing to do anything in my power to contribute to that end.

With cordial regards and best wishes.
Sincerely yours,

(signed) W. H. Wallace[42]

Wallace was so anxious to impress upon the Governor the idea that a vacancy would occur from Newberry's resignation (before Newberry actually resigned) that he wrote a second letter on the same day, stating that: "The stronger I think of that Fordney proposition the stronger it appeals to me."[43] Wallace knew that the Newberry issue had become a black eye to the Republican party (especially to the conservative wing) and that it would be impolitic for Newberry to keep his hard-won seat; but if Fordney got the seat what would the party lose? Moreover, Wallace had given the Governor advice on other appointments.[44] But Groesbeck answered on the 15th in the following manner:

Dear Mr. Wallace:

I have your favor with reference to the possible vacancy

[42]W. H. Wallace to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 13, 1922, Box 16-18, Groesbeck papers.

[43]Same to same.

[44]See for example same to same, April 24, 1922, Box 16-18, Groesbeck papers.

in the United States Senate.

I know nothing of Mr. Newberry's intention excepting what I see in the paper. If a vacancy occurs, I will be very glad to go over the whole subject with you at any time convenient.

With very best wishes, I am
Most sincerely yours,
Alex J. Groesbeck[45]

What Groesbeck saw in the papers after the election was, of course, how Newberryism had been such an important issue in the defeat of Townsend. And he saw, too, that the Newberry issue played a part in other states' elections. "Senator La Follette," for example, "went into Minnesota and advocated the election of Henrik Shipstead, Farmer-labor candidate over Kellogg and stressed Mr. Kellogg's vote for Newberry as one of the reasons why he should be defeated."[46] The black eye Newberryism gave the G. O. P. carried as far west as the state of Washington, where Newberryism was a collateral issue in the defeat of Poindexter.[47] In addition to the Progressives' internal attack upon the Republican party was Henry Ford's long standing duel. Ford's "belief that the election [1918] had been won for his opponent by 'Wall Street' or Jewish influence, and perhaps by a natural chagrin at his own defeat,"

[45]Alex J. Groesbeck to W. H. Wallace, November 15, 1922, Box 16-18, Groesbeck papers.

[46]New York Times, November 20, 1922, p. 9. For La Follette's views, see Christian Science Monitor, November 20, 1922, pp. 1,3.

[47]New York Times, November 20, 1922, p. 9; Newberryism was an issue in "other states" said the Lansing State Journal, November 21, 1922, p. 2; and see Ervin, p. 99: "In the elections of November 7, 1922, Democratic Senators were chosen to succeed Republicans in Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, West Virginia and Washington; whereas the Republicans gained seats only in Nebraska and Ohio."

concluded a later Newberry defender, "inspired his elaborate and expensive effort to keep his opponent out of the Senate."[48]

Newberry, though he had defended himself from Ford's attacks up to November, 1922, began to yield. After all, he had done his duty in voting against the League of Nations. But now he held himself responsible for Townsend's defeat. His old idol, T. R., had passed from the scene; Lodge, and Wilson too, were fading--indeed what a little time they had left! Newberry therefore, just before Senator Caraway of Arkansas could offer another resolution declaring him not entitled to his seat, drafted this document for Groesbeck:

Detroit, Mich., Nov. 18, 1922

Hon. Alex J. Groesbeck,
Governor of Michigan,
Lansing, Michigan.

Sir:

I tender herewith my resignation as United States Senator from Michigan, to take immediate effect.

I am impelled to take this action because at the recent election, notwithstanding his long and faithful public service and his strict adherence to the basic principles of constructive Republicanism which I hold in common with him, Senator Townsend was defeated. While this failure to re-elect him may have been brought about, in part, by over four years of continuous propaganda of misrepresentation and untruth, a fair analysis of the vote in Michigan and other States, where my friends and political enemies alike have suffered defeat, will demonstrate that a general feeling of unrest was mainly responsible therefor.

This situation renders futile further service by me in the United States Senate, where I have consistently supported the progressive policies of President Harding's Administration. My work there has been and would continue to be hampered by partisan political persecution, and I therefore cheerfully return my commission to the people from whom I received it.

I desire to record an expression of my gratitude for the

[48]Ervin, p. 586.

splendid friendship, loyalty and devotion of those who have endured with me, during the last four years, experiences unparalleled in the political history of the country. By direction of the Democratic Administration, these sic began immediately upon my nomination, by proceedings before a specially selected Grand Jury sitting in another State, which, by a vote of sixteen to one, completely exonerated those who had conducted my campaign. Then followed my election, with every issue which has since been raised clearly before the electorate of the State. A recount was demanded, and after a thorough and painstaking review of the ballots by the United States Senate I was found to have received a substantial majority.

While this was in progress I was subjected with a large number of representative men of Michigan, who had supported me, to a trial, following indictments procured by a Democratic Department of Justice, which through hundreds of agents had hounded and terrified men in all parts of the State into believing that some wrong had been done. Under the instructions given by the Court, convictions of a conspiracy to spend more than $3,750 naturally followed, and sentences imposing fines and imprisonment were immediately passed. All charges of bribery and corruption were, however, quashed by the specific order of the presiding Judge.

On appeal, the Supreme Court of the United States reversed the action of the court below because , as stated by Chief Justice White, of "the grave misapprehension and grievous misapplication of the Statute," which was also declared unconstitutional. A protracted investigation before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate resulted in a report sustaining my election and after a bitter partisan debate the Senate declared that I was entitled to my seat.

In view of all these proceedings my right to my seat has been fully confirmed and I am thankful to have been permitted to have served my State and my country and to have the eternal satisfaction of having by my vote aided in keeping the United States out of the League of Nations.

For those who so patriotically and unselfishly worked for my election, and in defense of my own honour and that of my family and friends, I have fought the fight and kept the faith. The time has now come however, when I can conscientiously lay down the burden and this I most cheerfully do. If in the future there seem to be opportunities for public service, I shall not hesitate to offer my service to the State which I love and the country I revere.

Respectfully,

Truman H. Newberry[49]

[49]Truman H. Newberry to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 19, 1922, Box 20-23, Groesbeck papers; Ervin, pp. 101-102.

Newberry personally handed this resignation to Governor Groesbeck at 6 p. m. on Sunday, November 19, 1922, in the home of a mutual friend, former Judge James O. Murfin, 744 Van Dyke avenue, Detroit.[50] It was printed in the newspapers the following day, and speculation began immediately as to the person Groesbeck would appoint to fill the senatorial vacancy. Would it be, as the New York Times guessed, between Lt. Governor Thomas Read ("who probably would have had the inside track had the vacancy arisen a few months ago"), William M. Potter, William Alden Smith, L. Whitney Watkins, and James Couzens?[51] Or would there be many other considerations, individualistic and party-wise, for the Governor to take into account; would Groesbeck perhaps even consider taking the Senatorship for himself?

[50]Detroit News, November 20, 1922, p. 1

[51]New York Times, November 20, 1922, p. 9.

THE SENATORIAL APPOINTMENT, 1922

"Now that the appointment is made what are you going to do about it, old dear?"

--Alex J. Groesbeck to Jack Cremer, December 6, 1922.

A veritable flood of advice in the form of letters, telegrams, delegations, petitions, and conversations poured in upon Governor Groesbeck from November 20 to November 29, 1922, advising him whom he should appoint and why. The Governor listened to most of this advice and, with the aid of his secretary, answered much of the correspondence, and the newspapermen were kept duly informed.[1] Groesbeck gave the Republican party a chance to be heard; he found sharp disagreement within its ranks.

The factions within the party at this time may be divided simply into the pro-Groesbeck people and the anti-Groesbeck people. These factions, moreover, were not drawn along geographical lines. From Detroit John S. Haggerty was close friend and political ally of the Governor's, while Federal Judge Arthur J. Tuttle, a prominent Republican, was anti-Groesbeck.[2] From the Upper Peninsula the Governor could reckon Merlin Wiley among his supporters, but had to count Chase Osborn among the opposition. Inconsistent as it may seem, George W. Welsh (a former Newberryite) of Grand Rapids

[1]Most prominent among these was the perennial John Fitzgibbon of the Detroit News, who, though never unfaithful to the confidence Groesbeck placed in him, wrote up shrewd political observations. Interview with George W. Welsh, Grand Rapids, August 16, 1957.

[2]Interview with Mrs. Tuttle Bailey, Lansing, July 29, 1957.

supported Groesbeck. Welsh's political views did not coincide with those of Arthur H. Vandenberg, the editor of the Grand Rapids Herald; hence, Welsh defined Vandenberg as anti-Groesbeck, simply because Groesbeck "had never stepped a foot in his [Vandenberg's] office."[3] Albert E. Sleeper headed the anti-Groesbeck faction, joining finally with Fred Green to bring about Groesbeck's downfall.[4]

This appointment could really advance the cause of the pro-Groesbeck group; for if Groesbeck chose someone who would consult with him, especially in the matter of patronage, then Groesbeck could virtually control the Republican party in Michigan. As John Fitzgibbon wrote:

> One of the plans that the appointment of a United States Senator by Governor Groesbeck is likely to disconcert relates to the naming of a collector of customs and of an appraiser of customs at Detroit and the selection of an additional Federal Judge at Detroit, which latter position was created by Congress several months ago. These appointments, it is said, were deferred by Senators Townsend and Newberry until after the election so that all the candidates could be kept in line.
>
> Now that Senator Newberry is out and Senator Townsend defeated, the latter is prepared to present to the President candidates for the three places. But it is surmised that the Senator appointed by the Governor may not agree to the candidates recommended by Senator Townsend. In that event there would be the possibility of none of the three men designated by Senator Townsend being appointed, or if appointed, confirmed, before the present Congress expires, March 4....[5]

With this opportunity for the Governor in mind, many advanced the availability of their candidates. Indeed, Groesbeck asked for recommendations so that he could select the best qualified

[3]George W. Welsh interview.

[4]This occurred in 1926. See the unpubl. thesis (Box "Sleeper's personal papers," 1940) by Mildred Eccles, "The Political Career of Albert E. Sleeper," p. 141.

[5]Detroit News, November 26, 1922, Sec. 2, p. 2.

person for the job. But he stipulated that the one he appointed "must be a progressive and have a past above suspicion of alliance with the big business interests. He must be so situated he will not antagonize capital or labor, and be acceptable to both."[6] Furthermore, the person appointed should have a national reputation.[7]

Class-wise, most of the recommendations came from businessmen and advanced other businessmen, usually in the same business, for candidacy. But added to these recommendations were those from a force which had quite recently arrived on the scene for political reckoning: women.

The women's club movement had its birth in Kalamazoo as a harmless library club back in 1852, and was now, in 1922, a vociferous band of about 60,000 strong.[8] The women of the state had indeed been inspired by Mrs. Lucinda H. Stone's warm desire and belief "that great good would result from the bringing together of women for cooperation in all that can uplift and educate Michigan womanhood."[9] Many of the clubs in the Federation endorsed Mrs. W. R. Alvord of Highland Park, who had recently been President of the Federation of Women's Clubs. An example of the mail Groesbeck got from this class runs as follows:

From Mrs. D. A. Klumph, 126 Prospect
Av. S. E. Grand Rapids, Mich.
President of the Four times Four Literary
Club.
To Governor Alexander Groesbeck:

[6]Detroit News, November 23, 1922, p. 1.

[7]Detroit News, November 23, 1922, p. 1.

[8]Irma T. Jones, "History of Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs, Organization," Michigan History Magazine, X (January, 1926), 70.

[9]Irma T. Jones (April, 1926), p. 230.

Dear Sir--

As President of a club of thirty two bright, alert, two-fisted women, I wish to say that in selecting someone to succeed Senator Newberry in the U. S. Senate, it would meet with our hearty approval should you choose, Mrs. Edith M. Alvord of Detroit, so lately State President of the Mich. Federation of Women's Clubs.

She would as ably represent the State of Michigan as she represented 55,000 Federated Club Women.

I understand that you are looking for some one who is popular and some one who is aggressive.

She is both.

Yours sincerely

Barbara B. Klumph
(Mrs. D. A. Klumph)[10]

Besides Mrs. Alvord, the women of Michigan, and the National Woman's Party in Michigan, also recommended Mrs. Edith Dunk of Detroit, Mrs. M. B. Vorce, and Mrs. Bina M. West, the vice-chairman of the Republican State Central Committee. Nationally, a woman Senator would not have shattered precedent, for on November 21, 1922, the eighty-seven year-old Mrs. W. H. Felton, "Georgia's Grand Old Lady," became the first woman Senator, though only for a single day, after which Senator George of Georgia took over to begin his long tenure in Washington.[11]

But a woman never made Groesbeck's list, showing that, although he liked to be associated with progressive measures, he was not that progressive. Only men were listed as senatorial possibilities. Another interesting aspect of the list which was made up in the Governor's office sometime

[10]This letter is in Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

[11]Detroit Free Press, November 22, 1922, p. 1.

between November 20th and November 29th (for the document was not specifically dated) is that the senatorial candidates were listed according to the cities they hailed from. The presence of such names as Haggerty and Osborn shows that the Governor considered, at least formally, supporters and non-supporters.

List of Senatorial Candidates:[12]

Grand Rapids--
Hon. William Alden Smith
Claude Hamilton
Arthur H. Vandenberg
John H. Blodgett
Charles R. Sligh

From Detroit--
Hon. James Couzens
Harold H. Emmons
Dr. J. B. Kennedy
Ralph Booth
John S. Haggerty
Oscar Webber
Hon. Edwin Denby
Fred H. Alger
William G. Simpson
Charles B. Warren
Judge J. O. Murfin

Marquette:--
Hon. Alton T. Roberts
Sault Ste. Marie:--
Hon. Chase S. Osborn
Saginaw:--
Hon. Joseph W. Fordney
Cheboygan:--
Hon. Herbert F. Baker
East Lansing:--
Mr. W. W. Potter
Niles:--
E. L. Hamilton
Lansing:--
Hon. Patrick H. Kelley
Chief Justice Grant Fellows
Justice George M. Clark
Ann Arbor:--
Dr. M. L. Burton
Holland:--
Gerritt J. Dickson [Diekema]
Manchester:--
L. Whitney Watkins

This document, furthermore, reveals several other aspects of Groesbeck's thinking during the critical nine-day period. First, it is dominated by businessmen-in-politics and politicians-in-business. A medical man made the list, but in 1922 doctors of medicine considered themselves as independent as any other business establishment. It goes without saying that all these men were professionals or experts in their own line of business. Second, when Newberry resigned Groesbeck

[12]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

said he would consider all recommendations; but this list does not include all the names recommended to him. It is therefore a selection of candidates to be considered in a serious manner. If this is true (and the only reason to doubt it would be that Groesbeck planted such a list among his official papers), then it shows that Groesbeck was prepared to perform a statesman's act in selecting a Senator from a group of friends plus enemies. Third, this list gives candidates from Grand Rapids and Detroit in order of importance, not in alphabetical order. Before we consider these men, as Groesbeck did, let us note that Groesbeck himself could have become the Senator, though it would have been through the "back door."

From Roy C. Clark of Benton Harbor the Governor received the following telegram, dated November 20, 1922:

"Believe you the only man that can beat Baker in two years for senate Leading citizens of this vicinity think same Ought not to ask anyone to take it for balance of term unless given chance to succeed himself You should be appointed to succeed Newberry"[13] Five days later, after being urged repeatedly by other friends to take the Senatorship,[14] the Governor's secretary answered Clark's proposal:

Dear Roy:

Governor Groesbeck has your telegram and he is carefully considering at this time the question as to whether he ought

[13]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

[14]One of the closest advisers to the Governor at this time, and one who urged Groesbeck to take the Senatorship, was George W. Welsh of Grand Rapids.

to resign the Governorship, permitting Lieutenant Governor Read to become Governor, with the understanding that as Governor he would appoint Groesbeck to the vacancy in the U. S. Senate.

I am satisfied that the Governor has made up his mind to hold on to the Governorship. I think he feels that under present conditions, it is a bigger job and means more to the people of Michigan than does the filling of the Newberry vacancy. At the same time there is some force in your argument, although personally I do not believe Baker will be as strong two years from now as he is now. By that time the people generally will have gotten on to him. He is no good and you and I know it, and it seems to me that in two years time the electorate generally will be pretty well satisfied on the same thing. A man like Baker thrives on discontent and unrest, and in the recent primary he deliberately foamented this condition of mind among farmers and laboring men.

With kindest personal regards to yourself and Mrs. Clark, I am

Very truly yours,
Secretary[15]

"Besides," Groesbeck told a friend, "can you imagine me down there [Washington] as only one voice among ninety-six? Why I'd never get anything done!"[16] Groesbeck indeed thought he could carry out his progressive measures only if he stayed in the state.

As for Herbert F. Baker, the "Cheboygan Bobcat," he considered himself a real Progressive, having been endorsed by La Follette, and was a runner-up to Townsend in the recent Republican primary. The "Bobcat" was also endorsed by the Democratic Woodbridge N. Ferris, who said: "There is little difference between a Progressive Republican and a Progressive Democrat."[17] The word "progressive" was indeed gaining popularity in 1922 in the West, especially, but Groesbeck, for

[15]Rolph Duff to Hon. Roy C. Clark, November 25, 1922, Box 1922 (ac, 1), Groesbeck papers.

[16]George W. Welsh interview.

[17]Adrian Daily Telegram, October 6, 1922, p. 1.

all his progressive measures, could not associate his independent progressivism with that of the "Bobcat," who, according to Groesbeck's friends, misused farmers and laborers for political purposes. Another possible factor in Groesbeck's elimination of Baker from the Senatorship was the fact that Baker had been defeated by Townsend in the Republican primary.

Also defeated in the primary, and therefore standing little chance for the appointment, was author-lecturer-businessman-politician Chase S. Osborn. Even before Newberry actually resigned, petitions had been printed up for people to sign endorsing Osborn for the appointment.[18] These impressive, bulky petitions, loaded with signatures, poured into the Governor's office, evidencing the existence, if not of a long-lasting Osborn faction, then at least of an organized effort to gain the appointment for him. They came from Petoskey and Manistique, from Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing, and Saugatuck and Battle Creek, from Escanaba and from the Soo .... But before the arrival of these petitions, Major Duff answered a letter from H. J. Smith of Sault Ste. Marie, where the drums for Osborn beat the loudest.

My dear Sir:

Governor Groesbeck is in the receipt of your special delivery letter regarding the appointment of a successor to Senator Newberry.

We have received a few telegrams advising former Governor Osborn's appointment to this place, and we understand

[18]On November 18, 1922, J. P. Chandler of 310 Barbeau Street, Sault Ste. Marie, sent little yellow slips to people throughout the state asking them to sign petitions endorsing Osborn in the event Newberry resigned. Box 1922 Senatorial 1923, Osborn papers.

there is a large petition on the way, but confidentially I may say to you that there is not the slightest chance that Mr. Osborn will be appointed by Governor Groesbeck.

Very truly yours,

(signed) Rolph Duff
Secretary[19]

Though Osborn had spent a considerable portion of his time in 1922 vacationing in Possum Poke, 'Possum Lane, Poulan, Georgia, he had kept in touch with Michigan politics, principally through correspondence with Fred W. Green.[20] And Osborn was becoming more and more associated with the Sleeper-Green alliance, which was definitely anti-Groesbeck. Because of this, despite the organized effort in his behalf, Osborn was never seriously considered for the position.

Groesbeck also spurned the efforts of groups which organized to support their favorites. "I am ready to listen to the qualifications of any candidate," he said, "but I refuse to listen to a lot of delegations. They can have no effect on the abilities of the men they are trying to help, and their only intention is to impress me. I don't want to be bothered with them."[21] After this statement, on November 23rd, he hopped in his car and sped to Ionia to check the convict-labor situation in Fred Green's Ypsilanti-Reed Furniture Company. Just before Groesbeck left Lansing, however, he had the following form-letter made up, to take care of the many telegrams swelling in his office.

[19]Rolph Duff to H. J. Smith, November 22, 1922, Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

[20]Correspondence of Fred W. Green and Chase S. Osborn, Box Jan.-Feb., 1922, Osborn papers.

[21]Detroit News, November 23, 1922, p. 1.

Dear Mr. _____:

I have your telegram recommending _____ for U. S. Senator.

I am carefully considering the qualifications and availability of all those for whom I have received recommendations. I can, of course, make but one appointment; and a definite announcement will be made early next week.

Sincerely yours,

Alex J. Groesbeck[22]

Returning to the Capitol, Groesbeck was still confronted with the process of selecting a United States Senator. After eliminating the most outstanding figure (Osborn) from the sparsely populated Upper Peninsula, Groesbeck must have thought that the choice could not go to any lesser known man, and Alton T. Roberts of Marquette was therefore eliminated. (If the U.P. never had a U. S. Senator, then it could at least be compensated and placated by the tradition of having priority in the party's choice of the state's Lieutenant Governor.)

Governor Groesbeck received favorite-son candidates from cities in the lower portion of the state. From Holland came Gerritt J. Diekema's candidacy. He was a lawyer, politician and businessman, and was connected with a Grand Rapids bank. Though his strength lay in the west of the state, he had been backed by Chase Osborn in the 1916 campaign for governor.[23] And though he had a commendable political record, Groesbeck eliminated the sixty-three year-old Diekema, if not for his age (for the new Senator was expected to be picked to pieces in Washington), then for his not being too widely known.

[22]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

[23]Eccles, p. 23.

Since Groesbeck had stipulated that his choice must be nationally known, several other candidates fell by the wayside. E. L. Hamilton of the small town of Niles and L. Whitney Watkins of the smaller town of Manchester were not too well-known on the state level, much less nationally, and they were eliminated. The state fuel administrator, W. W. Potter of East Lansing, was given an excellent chance by the press at the beginning of the race for the appointment; but Potter was an excellent fuel administrator and Groesbeck kept him where he would be of the greatest service to Michigan. From Lansing Justice George M. Clark was offered, but he was unknown nationally, and, as a second strike against him, he was associated with the Sleeper group.[24] Chief Justice Grant Fellows, also of Lansing, had a fair chance for the appointment, despite the fact that he had been on some side or other opposing Groesbeck since the turmoil at Bay City back in 1912, when Groesbeck had replaced Fellows as State Chairman of the Republican Committee. Fellows was unknown on the national scene. A third man from Lansing, who was as well known as any other Congressman in Washington, was the hustling Irishman, Patrick H. Kelley. Over fifty colleagues in the House wired Groesbeck to appoint Pat Kelley; not that he was unable to speak for himself: "Have received no message as per telephone conversation of last Monday. Am sending this wire for fear telegraph Co. may have made mistake in forwarding or delivering any message you may have sent. Am holding

[24]Eccles, p. 139.

myself subject to call."[25] Groesbeck received this wire on Thursday, November 23, and subsequently agreed to meet Kelley the coming Sunday in Detroit "to go over the situation with him."[26] Kelley would be told that he was not progressive enough and that he could hardly expect to be appointed to an office for which he had recently failed to win nomination.

But before Groesbeck met Kelley, he talked with a man who was not backed by any type of pressure, a man whose record for achievements stood on its own, without the ballyhoo of delegations screaming the goodness of their candidates. The Governor drove to Ann Arbor on November 25 to confer with Dr. Marion LeRoy Burton, President of the University of Michigan.

Born in 1874 at Brooklyn, Iowa, Burton was moved at an early age to Minnesota, where he grew up. From a newsboy on the streets of Minneapolis, where he got his early education, he advanced through school and college, and became Principal of Windom Institute, Minnesota, in 1900. In that year he married Nina Leona Moses. Leaving Windom in 1903, Burton studied at Yale, receiving his Bachelor of Divinity in 1906 and his Ph. D. in 1907. From 1907 to 1909 he served as pastor of the Church of Pilgrims in Brooklyn. As President-elect of Smith College, he spent the following year traveling in Europe. He stayed President of Smith from 1910 to 1917. Burton then spent three years as President of the

[25]Patrick H. Kelley to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 23, 1922, Box 25, Groesbeck papers.

[26]Alex J. Groesbeck to Hon. John E. Bird (a Judge in Adrian, Michigan), November 25, 1922, Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

University of Minnesota, then became the President of the University of Michigan in 1920, the post he held until his death in 1925.[27]

Since 1920 Dr. Burton had striven to build up the University of Michigan into the intellectual center of the entire country. He had gone before the State Legislature and obtained endorsement for a tremendous building program. Governor Groesbeck was undoubtedly attracted to the serious consideration of Burton because of his impressive record at Ann Arbor. Groesbeck had always liked hard-working men--indeed he would truck with no other kind--and men who were positively creating something for the public good.

The Governor and his party arrived in Ann Arbor about 5:00 p. m. on November 25th and, having dinner in Burton's home, talked until 10:30. Groesbeck asked Burton's views on national legislation, for, besides being a common and natural practice, he had specifically promised to check the candidates on this.[28] And he asked about the university building program. Groesbeck was especially interested to see Burton's reaction to the question: "If you are appointed Senator, what will become of the building program here?" Burton, leaning back in a comfortable easy-chair and waving his hands softly back and forth through the air, said laxly: "Oh the building program will go on; nothing to it; just laying one

[27]"Historical Notes," Michigan History Magazine IX (1925), 269-271.

[28]For example, Groesbeck wrote to the Association for the Advancement of Colored People on November 24, 1922, and promised to check candidates as to their feelings on the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill. Box 1 (Misc. Recom.), Groesbeck papers.

brick on top of the other, just one brick on another; up and up, the buildings will go up whether I'm here or in Washington, so I can be Senator and President at the same time."[29] Groesbeck's black eyes pierced Burton, and then flashed to his companions: Lieutenant Governor Thomas Read, John S. Haggerty of Detroit, and George W. Welsh of Grand Rapids, who became speaker of the house. According to Welsh, Groesbeck eliminated Burton from the senatorial list right after Burton aired his views on the university building program, and his attitude toward holding both offices concurrently. "That finished Burton right then and there," said Welsh, "and he had such a good chance too."[30] In addition, regents of the university wanted Burton to stay where he was.[31] They agreed with Groesbeck's view that the presidency of a growing university was a full-time job. Three days after this fateful meeting, Burton had the following telegram, an "extra rush report delivery," sent to Groesbeck: "After careful thought I have concluded to ask you to withdraw my name from further consideration for the senatorship. I deeply appreciate the honor you have done me."[32]

On November 25th, the same day the Governor and his party visited with Burton, the Detroit News publicized Thomas Read's

[29]George W. Welsh interview.

[30]George W. Welsh interview.

[31]Regents wanting Burton to stay in Ann Arbor were James E. Beal, Benjamin S. Hanchett of Grand Rapids, and William L. Clements of Bay City. Detroit News, November 25, 1922, p. 2.

[32]Marion LeRoy Burton to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 28, 1922, Box 20-23, Groesbeck papers.

announcement that he would run for Governor in 1924. This announcement came at the very time when Read was in Ann Arbor, acting as close friend and political advisor to Governor Groesbeck! This was a strange and almost inexplicable move on Read's part, for he knew that Governor Groesbeck wanted, indeed would need, more than two terms as Governor in order to carry out his program for the state. Political alliances and factions were so weak and unstable in Michigan that the mere thought of Groesbeck's resigning the Governorship (to take the Senatorship himself) had fanned Read's desire to become Governor, with or without Groesbeck's help. Also on Groesbeck's administrative team and hungry for the governorship were "Charles J. Deland, secretary of state; Thomas E. Johnson, superintendent of public instruction; Hugh A. McPherson, state banking commissioner; Charles A. Blaney of Kalamazoo, and Alton T. Roberts of Marquette, members of the state prison commission, and L. Whitney Watkins, of Manchester, who was the Progressive candidate in 1912."[33]

On the following day, on November 26th, after six hectic days of speculation and recommendations from almost every niche of the business world, the development on the senatorial vacancy seemed no longer of news interest, so it was relegated to the background. In the Detroit News, its place was taken on the front page by gossip on Charlie Chaplan's being engaged to the Polish star, Pola Negri. (Charlie neither confirmed nor denied the rumor.) The regular chapter on Henry Ford by Dean Marquis continued, as it had since

[33]Detroit News, November 25, 1922, p. 2.

November 19th (the day Newberry resigned), to command first-page attention.

By the 27th Groesbeck had his mind made up that the appointment should go to someone in Detroit; but before he arrived at this decision he had the difficult task of eliminating the influential candidates from Grand Rapids, the political capital of western Michigan. From this capital came the names of Charles R. Sligh, John H. Blodgett, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Claude Hamilton, and William Alden Smith. Only the former Senator, William Alden Smith, was known well enough to be considered seriously; and Groesbeck did consider him, despite such letters as the following, which was marked PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL:

My dear Governor:

I note that you have quite a difficult job on your hands at this time and I am therefore going to make a suggestion which I hope you will take in the spirit in which it is written.

I know that you would like to appoint a Detroit man to the Senate, but if that can not [sic] be found why not send an experienced man, like the Hon. William Alden Smith, who is well-known at Washington. He has had the experience and is probably better fitted for the work and can do Michigan more good for the short time that he is to be there than any other man. I believe that the Free Press would approve of this plan, however, I can get this information if you desire. As you know, his son married a daughter of Mr. McRae of the McRae Scripps league and that ought to be satisfactory to the new interests.

Now, you may say that he will not accept but I believe that there are certain interests that could persuade him to accept this appointment for the term. He would not be a candidate two years hence and that would leave the field to the man who is entitled to it and I consider that man to be yourself. I also believe that he would agree to support you at that time and, with his popularity and influence, he ought to be a great help to you. If you feel delicate about approaching him on this subject I shall be glad to do so privately and personally and advise you fully.

I should like to have you give this letter serious thought

and, if you think the suggestion does not appeal to you, kindly tear the same up instead of putting it in your file. I am personally interested in your future and make this suggestion in your behalf.

With kindest personal regards, I remain
Sincerely yours,

(signed) A. A. Schantz[34]

This letter, written on "Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Co." stationery, was obviously not torn up by Groesbeck. Four out of five of the letters endorsing William Alden Smith came from businessmen like Schantz. Had Groesbeck yielded to pressures like this, he would have been bound to the political will which those pressures represented. And Groesbeck was not about to be tied down. The other men from Grand Rapids--Sligh, Blodgett, Hamilton--were simply names on paper as far as the country was concerned, though they were well-known in their home city and were valuable in so far as local political alliances were concerned. (Claude T. Hamilton, for example, was a member of the State Executive Committee.) Even the brilliant editor of the Herald, Vandenberg, was unknown nationally and, though he had chronic senatorial aspirations, was eliminated. In 1928 Arthur H. Vandenberg was appointed U.S. Senator, filling the vacancy caused by Woodbridge N. Ferris' death in that year.

There were several factors that entered into Groesbeck's decision to name a Senator from Detroit. Detroit was Groesbeck's "own home town." It was the largest city in the state, and more candidates were recommended from there than

[34]A. A. Schantz to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 21, 1922, Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

any other city. It was a tradition, not always honored, that Detroit have one of the state's Senators.[35] (Ironically, Detroit had swung the election of Ferris, for he was beaten in the state at large.) Then, too, there was the cold political fact that Groesbeck had more friends, and more important friends, located in the Motor City. John S. Haggerty directed Groesbeck's political fortunes in Detroit and of course advised Groesbeck to give that city recognition by selecting a Detroit man to fill the vacancy. In selecting Detroit as the city from which the new Senator would be chosen, Groesbeck had eliminated all the candidates (at the high mark their number had surpassed fifty) except the following Detroit citizens: Mayor James Couzens, Harold H. Emmons, Dr. J. B. Kennedy, Ralph Booth, John S. Haggerty, Oscar Webber, Edwin Denby, Fred Alger, William G. Simpson, Charles Beecher Warren, and J. O. Murfin.

One of the best known from this group was Charles Beecher Warren, who, after making his fortune in the sugar business, had gone into politics, and was currently the United States Ambassador to Japan. Warren had been advanced as a candidate as early as November 21, 1922, and one backer, C. D. Bill, was not as interested in the city Warren hailed from as the particular business Warren represented. The following letter, reproduced in toto, shows a complete disregard for party organization.

[35]Detroit Free Press, November 21, 1922, p. 2.

OWOSSO SUGAR COMPANY

Factories at
Owosso and Lansing, Michigan
C. D. Bill, vice-pres. & Gen. Mgr.

Hon. A. J. Groesbeck, Governor
State of Michigan
Lansing, Michigan

My Dear Governor Groesbeck:--

I am sure I can write you the following letter without it occurring to you that I am presuming on your friendship, at any rate I am writing in the spirit as has come out of the very kindly way that you have always treated me.

I have in mind the resignation of Senator Newberry. I know that when you make the final selection to fill this vacancy, your friends at least will have no criticism to make as they all have endless confidence in your good judgement.

I notice in the papers that you said something about appointing a man "that would be both friendly to labor and the farmers". In this connection I can think of noone [sic] that would fill the bill better than W. H. Wallace of Saginaw, irrespective of the fact that he is a Captain of Industry, my experience has been that I have always found him absolutely impartial and just in matters involving the interests of both labor and the farmer. It is a coincidence that I should also present for your consideration the suggestion that Mr. Charles B. Warren whom I understand is returning from Japan, should fill the position as Senator from The State of Michigan in a most creditable manner. Both of these gentlemen are prominently connected with the same company.

I am sure you will consider this a very personal and privileged communication. I know you will accept it for what it is worth.

With kindest personal regards,
Very truly yours

(signed) C. D. Bill[36]

CDB/McC

Recalling that W. H. Wallace endorsed Joe Fordney (of high tariff notoriety) and seeing him here "connected with the same company" of Charles B. Warren, the "Sugar King," it is apparent that the sugar businesses of Michigan represented

[36]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

a political faction within the Republican party; and, though it believed in what we today normally term "conservatism,"[37] it did not cooperate one iota with similar groups or interests within the same party on the state level; only on the national level did the conservatives band together and work as a united group. The national G. O. P. leaders mentioned Warren's name for the appointment more than any other,[38] but in the state of Michigan Warren had few backers and these were confined to associates in the sugar business. It was later said that Charles Beecher Warren had been the "man behind the throne" in Michigan politics in 1920; and it may well be that Warren was largely responsible for getting Groesbeck elected to the Governorship in that year, and that subsequently "the two strong men clashed." Though Groesbeck's elimination of Charles Beecher Warren was to hurt him later politically, Groesbeck had to be top man in 1922.

Another strong and influential man of Detroit was Ralph H. Booth, President of the Detroit Art Commission and head of the Booth Publishing Company. He directed eight newspapers in the state. Apparently, Governor Groesbeck made overtures, through Fitzgibbon of the News, to the effect of offering Booth the Senatorship.[39] Groesbeck did this just to find out how Booth felt on the Senatorship. Booth waited

[37]Warren, Fordney, and Wallace believed in anything to make business profitable; they neither liked nor disliked the farmers and labor; they were absolutely indifferent, which is worse than liking or disliking.

[38]Detroit News, November 20, 1922, p. 2.

[39]George W. Welsh interview.

until the 27th, then, to defend his ego, wrote Groesbeck a letter declining the "offer."[40] Had Booth become Senator, Groesbeck would have strengthened his political future (by gaining the whole-hearted backing of the Booth newspapers). But this did not happen.

In selecting a man from Detroit, Groesbeck was faced with the possibility of losing the close friendship of John S. Haggerty and Judge J. O. Murfin. Both these men were Senatorial candidates, but were unknown nationally, and, in Groesbeck's judgement, neither would have represented Michigan adequately in the nation's capital. Also eliminated because of not being widely known outside of Detroit were Oscar Webber, Edwin Denby, and Fred Alger. William G. Simpson, for all his stationery and dreams of political power, Groesbeck considered at best a weak candidate. The candidates were narrowed down to Couzens, Emmons, and Kennedy.

Groesbeck could have transformed J. B. Kennedy from a medico into a politico with the drop of a letter. Dr. Kennedy wanted the Senatorship, and was backed up by a solid group of Detroit doctors.[41] But the Governor, perhaps suspecting that medical skills were not as transferable as business skills were in politics, did not yield to the pressure of the medical profession.

The pressures from other businesses were dominant. Backing Harold Emmons was the Hudson Motor Car Company, C. S. Mott of General Motors, and other lesser business firms.

[40]Ralph H. Booth to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 27, 1922, Box 12a-15, Groesbeck papers.

[41]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

Emmons was the President of the Detroit Board of Commerce, and was supported by that group of seven thousand members.[42] He also got the official support of Edwin L. Miller, the Supervising Principal of High Schools in Detroit. (Miller also told Groesbeck that some Detroiters were definitely against Couzens.)[43] Harold Emmons had an excellent chance, in fact he was a good second or third choice, but he was without a national reputation and perhaps could have been associated, since he was backed by two big companies, with big business.

In a way, the consideration of James Couzens was as inexplicable as the Mah Jong craze sweeping the country. But there are reasons (besides a process of elimination) which may be assigned to Groesbeck's offering the Senatorship to James Couzens. He was a successful businessman; and he had transferred that success to the administration of a huge city government. Couzens was from Detroit, and he had a national reputation. Having broken with Ford, he could not be accused of representing big business interests. He was a hard worker--indefatigable. He was aggressive, and would stand up for Michigan's rights. He had so much money that he could not be influenced by any political pressure group; he was, as political parlance goes, "clean." Indeed, Couzens wasn't associated with any of the factions; and Groesbeck therefore could not be accused of playing favorites.

But the political dopesters did manage one reason which

[42]Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

[43]Edwin L. Miller to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 21, 1922, Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

revolved about the idea of Groesbeck becoming President of the United States in 1924. This was involved. First, Henry Ford was looming as a potentially strong presidential candidate for the coming 1924 campaign.[44] He would have a Democratic South, and a strong sentiment neither Southern nor Democratic working in his favor. Nationally, the Republican leaders were frankly apprehensive about Ford's potentiality; especially since Ford was from Michigan and had made such a close race against Newberry in 1918. And when, in 1922, the Michigan electorate chose Ferris as the first Democrat to be sent from that state with a senatorial toga in seventy years, the Republican's apprehensions grew. Michigan, too, in 1922, had become, with its industrial increase of population, a doubtful state, and therefore a pivitol state, which had to be considered--like Ohio, New York, Indiana--in order to win at the polls. And how could Michigan be held in the coming 1924 National Republican Convention? How indeed! exclaimed the dopesters, except by the strong hand of that brilliant orator and lawyer and successful Governor, Alex J. Groesbeck. And beside Groesbeck would be Senator James Couzens, whom presidential lightning could never strike, because Couzens was born in Canada. Couzens, too, knew Ford as well as any man ever knew him, and could speak with authority on that score. And the mere fact of Couzens' great wealth would make many men sit up and take notice. Couzens indeed was quite well known on the national level.[45]

[44]See N. Y. Times, November 16, 1922, p. 2.

[45]Detroit News, November 29, 1922, pp. 1, 29.

It is more likely, however, that Groesbeck wanted to become Attorney General of the United States. "And he would have been one of the best ever!" friends thought.[46] But it must be added that the Attorney Generalship might have been a presidential stepping stone for Groesbeck, following his pattern of becoming Governor.

In the political triangle of Ford-Groesbeck-Couzens, what was Groesbeck's attitude toward Ford in 1922? Ford, though not making Groesbeck's list of senatorial candidates, had been recommended by a few admirers. A woman from Deerfield wrote:

Alex J Grosebeck [sic] ,

Honorable Sir. Do you want your name to go down in history as one of Michigans great men? If so, there is only one thing you should do. Newberry's seat in the senate belongs to Henry Ford by right, are you big enough to put him there. The eyes of Michigan are on you. The women will not stand for playing party politics. Golden rule men are always great. May God help you to do right.[47]

Henry Ford naturally thought in favorable terms with respect to the Governor who undertook a tremendous highway building program to bring Michigan--and Ford cars--out of the mud. But Groesbeck, though he had come out for Ford in 1918, did not respect the Golden Rule in 1922. "I'd hate to tell you what he thought of Ford in 1922!" said one of Groesbeck's closer friends. Groesbeck considered Ford's business as becoming too big and expanded, especially after Ford had bought the Detroit, Toledo, and Iron Railroad. On November 19, 1922,

[46]George W. Welsh interview.

[47]Mrs. Jennie Roberts to Alex J. Groesbeck, November 23, 1922, Box "1922 Recommendations," Groesbeck papers.

Ford had applied to the Interstate Commerce Commission for authority to issue $1,000,000 in employes' investment certificates, so that they could share in the profits of the Railroad.[48] President Harding, moreover, was about to appoint new members to the Interstate Commerce Commission. Now these new members could be of service to Ford. But the man Groesbeck appointed as Senator, if he was antagonistic to Ford, could oppose Harding's appointments and therefore block Ford's expanding ambitions. James Couzens was such a man. Furthermore, Ford also had an eye on Muscle Shoals. Couzens, as Senator, would be in a position to block that ambition.[49]

Groesbeck's relationship with Couzens left much to be desired. Groesbeck never had any personal affection for Couzens; and Couzens never sent Groesbeck a card on his birthday or at Christmas time.[50] Officially, the Mayor had been highly critical of the Governor and his red tape, especially, with respect to the municipal ownership war. In fact, this was later guessed as the very reason why Groesbeck appointed Couzens to the Senate: the "traction interests" influenced the Governor.[51]

Although municipal ownership of Detroit's streetcars was a fact in November, 1922, Couzens was still opposed by

[48]Detroit Free Press, November 19, 1922, p. 1.

[49]Detroit Free Press, December 5, 1922, p. 1.

[50]Detroit News, November 29, 1922, p. 1.

[51]R. Barry, "Newberry's Successor," Outlook CXXXII (December 20, 1922), 695; "Rise of a News Butcher to a United States Senatorship," Current Opinion LXXIV (February 1923), 161.

the "interests." And there had been an unusual epidemic of trouble with the lines in that month.[52] Couzens carried his crusade to other cities. Speaking in Grand Rapids, Couzens bluntly told the leading citizens and businessmen there that they were being "robbed" in paying a 10¢ fare; in Detroit it was only 5¢. Right or wrong, the political capital of western Michigan did not like being "told" how it should run its business, not by the Mayor of Detroit. If Groesbeck considered the local traction interests in Detroit or Grand Rapids, and wanted to aid them, what better way than by exiling the Mayor to Washington on a senatorial passport? But the evidence does not support his theory. Had Groesbeck wanted to aid some specific business, he could have gained more political profit from the sugar interests of the Wallace-Warren brand. Then, too, Groesbeck had changing views on municipal ownership. In November, 1922, Groesbeck was sold on the advantages of municipal ownership--for much the same reasons that sold Couzens on the idea. Both men were even considering the possibilities of public owned and operated railroads on the national level, but these views were in a transitional and formative stage with both men in November, 1922.

Out of the maze of motives, the following stand forth as the clearest reasons for Groesbeck's appointment of Couzens:

1. Couzens was a successful businessman, and had transferred that skill into public service.
2. Couzens would help block Ford's expanding ambitions.

[52]Besides the controversy between the D. U. R. and the city over track rentals, money accredited for materials purchased, and method of arbitration, there were added the troubles of robbery and de-railed streetcars; see Detroit News, November, 1922.

3. Couzens could not be accused of representing big business.
4. Couzens would be valuable in the Attorney General (and then presidential) aspirations of Groesbeck.
5. Couzens was a "clean" choice.
6. Couzens was popular and above party strife.
7. Other candidates were eliminated.
8. Couzens could control Federal patronage and help Groesbeck restore some degree of order to the Republican party in Michigan.
9. Couzens was known on the national level.

On November 28, 1922, Groesbeck talked with Couzens and offered him the Senatorship. The Detroit News made a big play to keep Couzens in Detroit by printing all the comments, petitions, and letters urging Couzens to stay in Detroit to clean up the few scraps left from the municipal ownership war.[53] But the next day Couzens was in New York to spend Thanksgiving with his daughter; and John C. Lodge became acting-Mayor of Detroit. Groesbeck wired:

Hon. James Couzens
Hotel Belmont
New York City, N. Y.

You were appointed United States Senator for Michigan this morning. I congratulate you most sincerely. I am thoroughly convinced that your previous decision to refrain from being interviewed on specific national issues until after you have been sworn in is absolutely correct.

Alex J. Groesbeck[54]

Quizzed in New York the following day, Couzens hinted that he would seek re-election, but dodged national issues. The ship subsidy? "Nothing to say." Modification of the Volstead law? "I am," Couzens replied, "broadly speaking, a prohobitionist, but I am not an adamant fanatic on the subject." Cancellation of European debt? Which particular

[53]Detroit News, November 28, 1922, p. 1.

[54]Alex J. Groesbeck to James Couzens, November 29, 1922, Box 25, Groesbeck papers.

party or group will you support? "Boys," said Couzens, leveling a forefinger at the reporters, "I am not going to fly off the handle. I am a Republican. I hope I am a progressive Republican. But I am going to Washington to represent the whole people and no especial fraction of the people...."[55]

Though Couzens and Groesbeck had the well wishes of many people in Michigan, they were balanced with unfavorable opinions. The Senate choice was rapped in Kent county. Major Emery (a former Newberry defender) cited the argument against the Senate's becoming a "millionaires' club." Monroe and Genesee Republicans also questioned the logic of Couzens' appointment. Grand Rapids, recalling Couzens' unpopular speech, was against the appointment. Even Couzens' parents thought he should have stayed in Detroit because he could have done more good there as Mayor. (But according to Couzens he had done all he could in the municipalization of the city's lines. Hadn't his proposals been voted down at the last election? Besides, he was tiring of the routine as Mayor; he sought bigger game. And Couzens could hardly turn down the Senatorship which Ford had tried so hard to win.) "Bobcat" Baker and Pat Kelley prepared to stop Groesbeck from becoming Michigan's political boss, and they began grouping their respective forces to finish the fight for the Senate seat in 1924. Jack Cremer, self-styled political wizard, was infuriated with the Couzens' appointment. The Governor answered Cremer.

[55]Detroit Free Press, November 30, 1922, p. 1.

Dear Jack:

I have your letter of the 29th ultimo regarding the appointment of Mr. Couzens.

There is one good thing about you, and that is that you are brutally frank. Now that the appointment is made what are you going to do about it, old dear?

Most sincerely yours,

Alex J. Groesbeck[56]

[56]Alex J. Groesbeck to J. F. Cremer, December 6, 1922, Box 1 (Recommendations to succeed Newberry), Groesbeck papers.

EPILOGUE

On December 7, 1922, Vice President Coolidge swore Couzens into the Senate, after which Couzens took a seat among the Democrats,[1] and his whole senatorial career, stretching from 1922 to 1936, was just as unpredictable. He also sat with Republicans, living up to his announcement: "I don't want to be classified at all," voted mainly with the Progressives, and usually proposed negative measures.

A highlight of Senator Couzens' career was his war with Andrew Mellon, the so-called "greatest Secretary of the Treasurery since Alexander Hamilton." Those with large incomes gave Mellon that quaint title after the first Mellon tax bill (which was designed to favor those who paid their taxes in the higher bracket). Couzens wrote Mellon a letter of disapproval, was answered fecitiously, and then "jammed through the Senate a resolution for a real probe of the Internal Revenue Bureau," despite the protesting voice of Senator David A. Reed (a Newberry defender and Mellon's senatorial spokesman).[2] The feud grew hot and Couzens enjoyed himself hugely. Mellon, misunderstanding why a fellow millionaire like Couzens objected to a rich man's tax bill, tried to bring Couzens to time by reviving the Ford-stock-selling circumstances of 1919. Did the government get its just cut?

[1]Detroit Free Press, December 8, 1922, p. 1.

[2]Frank R. Kent, "Couzens of Michigan," American Mercury XI (May 1927), 50.

An investigation was ordered. The former stockholders of the Ford Company were naturally concerned, for they stood to lose much money. The tax suit could have cost Couzens ten millions, but he was conspicuously uninterested in the money. "I don't give a damn about the ten millions," he said, "but I don't want to lose."[3] And Couzens did not lose; he proved "by photostat copies of the Internal Revenue Bureau's own records that the case was investigated and closed in 1922, and that Mr. Mellon, in stating it had not, was badly misinformed--which is not, however, the way Senator Couzens puts it."[4] Couzens gave the ten millions, as he shouted he would, to a children's charity fund, and continued his probe of the Bureau. What he uncovered is all set out in the Congressional Record. He did not uncover any actual crookedness, but he did expose some embarrassing situations, and "supported by much convincing evidence, he did make specific charges of favoritism in adjusting tax claims of certain exceedingly rich newspaper publishers who were supporters of the administration."[5] Armed with his awkward facts, Couzens ultimately failed because he lacked newspaper support, because Democratic leadership in Congress was dead, and because of the "unprecedentedly impregnable position of Mr. Mellon" which was secured from America's general prosperity in the Twenties. But Couzens learned a lesson from the feud: if he had control of the Revenue Bureau, he could control the

[3]Kent, p. 53.

[4]Kent, p. 53.

[5]Kent. p. 52.

politics of the entire nation, because that Bureau had the power to reward and punish.[6]

Other senatorial activities of Couzens include his negative approach to appointments. Hardly ever advancing a candidate of his own, he gained the Republican administration's antipathy by blocking confirmations. He got in bad with Harding because of this, and no less so with President Coolidge. Coolidge wanted Charles Beecher Warren as Attorney General; but Couzens knew that "Mr. Warren was a defendent in the anti-trust dissolution suit brought by the Government in 1910 against the American Sugar Refining Company, and that trust was dissolved in May, 1922, as a result of the Government's suit." Moreover, Couzens knew that "this company applied to Attorney General Stone for consent to a modification of the dissolution decree of May, 1922, in order that the company might absorb the National Sugar Refining Company of New Jersey. Mr. Stone rejected the application."[7] Coolidge shifted Attorney General Stone to the Supreme Court and appointed Warren, the "sugar king," to fill his place.[8] Should the sugar-trust application be renewed it would have to pass the new Attorney General; but Couzens, visualizing Warren as both petitioner and judge, successfully opposed the confirmation.[9]

[6]Kent, p. 55.

[7]"Mr. Coolidge makes good; protest against recent appointments to high office," Nation, CXX (February 25, 1925), 202.

[8]"Fitness of the new attorney-general," Literary Digest, LXXXIV (January 31, 1925), 13.

[9]Vice President Dawes could have cast the tie-breaking vote, but he was absent that day. "President's dilemma," Outlook, CXXXIX (March 25, 1925), 437-438.

In a way, Couzens enjoyed the Warren fight more than the others, because Warren stood for business getting too big, for business growth with government help, and for money first and public service second. Warren was rejected, his reputation damaged; and Couzens, recalling his own rejection as a bookkeeper, enjoyed being on the inside looking out. Warren represented also something else to Couzens personally: Warren was an honor graduate of the University of Michigan, a place on which Couzens frowned, especially after he gave his son, Frank, a big send-off party celebrating the son's intentions to attend the University--only to be informed that Frank's academic record was inadequate for admittance. (This was unfortunate because university training can be of value to any mayor. Frank later became Mayor of Detroit.) Then, too, Couzens knew that Warren could not be Attorney General with Alex J. Groesbeck wanting his just due.

But even with the connection made with Couzens in 1922, which was as strange as a marriage of good and evil, Groesbeck never became Attorney General of the United States. He stayed in Michigan shining as one of that state's most brilliant public servants. Always he sought economy and efficiency in the state's business. He sought economy in the state police force and he urged cooperation between that force and the county sheriffs and the city police. He vigorously sponsored a bill for free diphtheria preventive and antitoxin, which not only saved the taxpayers' money but also their children's lives.[10] And he built his highways.

[10]Paul De Kruif, Life Among the Doctors (New York, 1949), p. 26.

Though Groesbeck was Governor for three years following the Couzens' appointment, he did not allow personal political ambition hamstringing policies he thought right for the public good. He further irritated Fred W. Green (in January 1923) by forbidding Green's continued use of convict-labor in making furniture at Ionia.[11] He lost the valuable ally of John S. Haggerty in an episode over the state fair: Haggerty knew that a contract for electrical work had not gone to the lowest bidder and did nothing about it; but Groesbeck also knew of the unfair contract and ordered an investigation, and Haggerty's political influence in Detroit went over to the Green-Sleeper-Osborn forces.[12] It is to Governor Groesbeck's credit that he, still aided by a few co-workers like "Three Per Cent" Perry who was a whiz at figures, kept the public's business in good order and free from the taint of political lions roaming the public streets.

The "Green Alliance" made Fred W. Green Governor-elect in 1926, a date that marked the return of a strong, Newberry-like organization in Michigan.[13] Triumphant in the victory

[11]Groesbeck told Green to his face; this is one of the few items recorded in the Groesbeck diary, which was started in January, 1923, and discontinued that same month because Groesbeck was simply too busy to keep a diary, a loss to history.

[12]Interview with Fred B. Perry, Lansing, August 14, 1957.

[13]A special note on Truman Handy Newberry is required. After his resignation from the Senate, he took his family on a world tour. In Tokyo he was impressed with Japanese efficiency, and opined that Japan's law and order should have stayed in Shantung, China. And there, as elsewhere, he favored a world court, without teeth, and remained a stout foe of the League of Nations. (See Japanese Advertizer of May 12, 1923.) As the Twenties and Newberry passed from the public scene, only collectors like

of machine politics over individualism, Green, without the slightest intention of doing so, asked Fred Perry how he would like to stay on as head of purchasing and accounting--a cruel joke in view of Perry's excellent ability. Of course Governor Green blasted the public service of Groesbeck's regime. "Mr. Groesbeck ruthlessly put such men as Oscar Webber of the J. L. Hudson Company and John Endicott of Newcomb, Endicott & Co. off a state board because they would not do his every bidding," said Green.[14]

Groesbeck returned to private law practice in Detroit, occupying his offices high up in the Dime Building, then finally moving into the dark-gray marble corridors and jet-black offices of the Penobscot. He tried several comebacks in political life, but had to be content in the background. (Some say he preferred to stay in the background, using whatever influence he had without the publicity; and this may be true for he did shun publicity.) As the years passed, he slacked off on his law practice as far as volume business is

C. M. Burton seemed interested in Newberry's chief mark in history--the senatorial contest--and Burton requested any papers he could get concerning the Newberry case, "a monstrous case to be better understood in the future." (see C. M. Burton's letter to Paul H. King, July 24, 1928, Box E & M, B. N423, Newberry papers.) The former Senator, in the Thirties, got in the newspapers only once in a while, as when he was shown launching his new $200,000 yacht, the Truant, at the Mathis Yacht Building Corporation in Camden. (see Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 13, 1930.) His money got him into the exclusive Misquamicut Golf Club at Watch Hill, Rhode Island; and in 1935 Ervin's book came out vindicating Newberry. He died in 1945, his estate estimated at $10,000,000.

[14]Newspaper clipping, (Detroit Evening Times, September 3, 1930) found in Groesbeck's biographical folder at the Michigan State Library.

concerned and took fewer and fewer "small" cases and concentrated his great energy on one or two big corporation cases per year.

In the late Thirties and early Forties, Groesbeck seemed in search of something missed in his private life. He still kept in physical shape--"He was a peach," commented a friend--with ice skating--"A beautiful skater"--and with soft ball--"A dandy sport"--and with tennis. He went in for yachting. He bought the Sillia (which is the name of some Hawaiian flower) and then the Cristina (which was formerly owned by John Jacob Astor). The parties he gave on the Cristina were, according to those who attended, fabulously grand. The food served at these parties was the high point, for A. J. was a seasoned gourmet. He was also an expensive dresser, usually clothing himself in rich dark-colored suits; and he wore always a complete outfit, wearing a vest in hot summer heat; and he preferred a stiff-collared shirt to the softer styles. He could never stand for any type of weakness from anybody, since he never admitted defeat himself. To his secretaries, he was the type "you never said 'Good Morning' to unless he said it first." He was energetic almost to the end of his life. During a rare contemplation on death, he wrote: "I don't want to be put in the ground."[15]

Besides his boundless energy, it was the brain (that hive of subtlety) of Groesbeck's that marvelled his friends and confounded his enemies; and when, in 1953, he died, some thought it remarkable that the brilliant lawyer had not

[15]Groesbeck's 1912 Will; Detroit Free Press, September 17, 1954, p. 1.

penned an adequate will.[16] Even during his last two years, from 1951 to 1953, when death was not too far away for any man in his late seventies, Groesbeck did not make out a will. Instead, he became reminiscent of by-gone days, days of his youth--as a boy in home-spun clothes on the farm, where his chief friend and confidante had been his mother, Julia Coquillard Groesbeck; as a young man rising in politics and business; and always the "big brother" to his sister, Adele Groesbeck. Tragically, the will A. J. did leave, a scrap made out in 1912, became a source of bitterness and ill-feeling. Some newspapers even made a scandal out of A. J.'s private life because one Julia Dubuque, a Berkley dress shop owner, claimed to have been A. J.'s close friend and confidante from 1942 to 1951, and in the last days of his illness, from 1951 to 1953, when she only spent two or three evenings per week with him on the Cristina. The court awarded Miss Dubuque $60,868 of the million-dollar Alex J. Groesbeck estate for being his friend.[17]

James Couzens' attitude toward death was not identical to Groesbeck's. In the senatorial harness until he died, Couzens maintained his fighting vigor and devil-may-care attitude. A frequent guest at the John Hopkins Hospital, Couzens did not like the doctors and nurses catering to him

[16] One explanation for this is that if A. J. had constructed an elaborate will, it would have been an admission to himself that he was soon to go--and A. J. did not look forward to death.

[17] Groesbeck died on March 10, 1953, at Jennings Hospital from heart failure, a chronic ailment. Detroit Free Press, March 11, 1953, p. 1.

because of his great wealth and national position. "Put me down in a ward with the niggers," he demanded, "and cut me up quick."[18] Couzens indeed did other things with his money. Before his death in 1936, he had given huge sums (the ten millions from the Mellon war) for children's homes in Michigan, provided for a nurses' home in Detroit, and for the reconstruction of a high school--which had been blown up by some maniac--in Bath, Michigan. Any honors or publicity from these worthy philanthropies Couzens protested in strong, loud language. (Groesbeck kept his philanthropies secret.)

Both Groesbeck and Couzens had their virtues and vices, and it is often difficult to tell one from the other, yet each is worthy of study. Each, like most humans, had "two souls" dwelling in his breast; and if Groesbeck's chief virtue was in public service, then Couzens' was in private life. In this respect, both Groesbeck and Couzens can be considered as "heroes," and it was wholly fitting and proper that they came to an entente, though ever so briefly, in November of 1922.[19]

In conclusion, this study suggests the following generalizations with respect to the nature of political behavior of Michigan Republicans during the birth of the Twenties. Two forces were struggling for supremacy. One was the

[18]Ray Tucker, Sons of the Wild Jackass (Boston, 1932), p. 231.

[19]Groesbeck later regretted having appointed Couzens because he blamed the Senator, in 1933, for being responsible for the bank failure in Detroit. See Malcolm Bingay, Detroit Is My Own Home Town (Indianapolis, 1946), p. 120; and John C. Lodge, I Remember Detroit (Detroit, 1949), p. 101.

Newberry-type of conservatism--a strong political organization backed by money; and this had connections on the national as well as the state level. The other force represented the individualism of the Groesbeck-Couzens type; and this operated mainly on the state level. Moreover, the Republican party in Michigan became disorganized in its search for individuals and principles around which to center a strong organization.

This struggle was an outgrowth of principles. "Progressivism" may be dismissed, for that term seemed to mean all things to all men. Not so with business principles. Since most of the Republicans were businessmen, the principles of competition, of individualism, and of temporary alliances for temporary gains became the themes of political behavior in Michigan, and the Republican party became a facade for this struggle.

Michigan's political system in the early Twenties, the echo of which may be heard today, can best be understood and evaluated by examining the characters and philosophies and deeds of individual businessmen like the Fords and the Newberrys, and like the Couzenses and the Groesbecks.

Bibliography

The most valuable sources for this essay were the unpublished papers and letters of the men involved, personal interviews, articles in periodicals, and newspapers. For books and articles, a bibliography that helped was Peter J. Turano's Michigan State and Local Government and Politics: A Bibliography, Bureau of Government Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1955. For the most part, however, the guidance and encouragement of the following were of more help: Mrs. Esther Laughlin, Head of the Michigan Section, Michigan State Library; Miss Genieva Kebler, Research Assistant at the Archives Center; Dr. Philip Mason, Director of the Archives Center, Michigan Historical Commission; Professor Madison Kuhn, Department of History, Michigan State University. The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature was very helpful and was far superior to the skimpy Analytic Index of the Michigan History Magazine, Vols. 1-25, 1917-1941, compiled by B. H. Uhlendorf and edited by George N. Fuller, Michigan Historical Commission, Lansing, 1944.

A biography of James Couzens exists in typescript--"James Couzens of Detroit," by Harry Barnard--but it was not wholly available; only the parts that Allan Nevins used in his valuable book on Ford were gleaned for this essay. But I am thankful to Mr. Barnard for his letter advising me where the best sources were to be found on Couzens' appointment: Detroit newspapers. The best sources for Couzens' career in

general were the articles in periodicals, a few of which were signed by Couzens himself. For studies of Couzens' character, see Malcolm Bingay's Detroit Is My Own Home Town (Indianapolis, 1946) and Ray Tucker's Sons of the Wild Jackass (Boston, 1932).

No full-scale biography of Groesbeck exists; so personal interviews were heavily relied upon. Additional information on Groesbeck can be gleaned from the two-page account in Messages of the Governors of Michigan, vol. 4, ed. George N. Fuller, Lansing, 1927, and from the obituaries in the newspapers. One article of special value was Frederick L. Collin's "A. J.--A Lonely Soul," Woman's Home Companion LI (October 1924).

Indispensible to a study of the Newberry-Ford contest is Spencer Ervin's Henry Ford vs. Truman H. Newberry: The Famous Senate Election Contest: A Study in American Politics, Legislation and Justice (New York, 1935). Also helpful to a study of Newberry are the letters, newspaper clippings, scrapbook, and other papers relating to him at the Detroit Public Library.

UNPUBLISHED PAPERS AND LETTERS

The only thing wrong with these is their location. It would be much more convenient for scholars, for instance, if all the papers of Michigan's public officials were located in one place. But the following places have excellent staffs and the materials are just waiting for exploitation.

Groesbeck papers, Archives Records Center, Michigan Historical Commission, DeWitt Road, Lansing, Michigan.

Groesbeck's diary and 1912 Will, 862 Penobscot Building, Detroit, Michigan.

Newberry papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

Osborn papers, Michigan Historical Collections, Rackham Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Sleeper papers, Archive Records Center, Michigan Historical Commission, DeWitt Road, Lansing, Michigan. See especially the unpubl. thesis "The Political Career of Albert E. Sleeper," by Mildred K. Eccles (the final draft of which was deposited at Detroit, Wayne University, 1941).

Tuttle letters, Michigan Historical Collections, Rackham Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

One of the greatest rewards for research in recent history is the chance to talk with the kindly persons who actually lived through, or even had a part in, that history. Some of the people interviewed, however, want their names kept secret, and, since their information was given in confidence, specific citation will have to wait until a more convenient time.

Mrs. Tuttle Bailey, 2120 Moores River Drive, Lansing, Michigan, Daughter of Federal Judge Arthur J. Tuttle, who was a friend of Senator Newberry.

Margaret Simmons, 862 Penobscot Building, Detroit, Michigan. Secretary to Groesbeck when he practiced law in Detroit. Miss Simmons, a practicing attorney, is, with Mr. Hugo Krave, an administrator of the Alex J. Groesbeck estate.

Fred B. Perry, 810 North Logan, Lansing, Michigan. Mr. Perry was the first secretary of the state administrative board, and was in charge of purchasing and accounting under Governor Groesbeck's administration. He is at present a legislative agent (or "lobbyist" as he calls it) for the Consumers Power Company at Lansing.

George W. Welsh, 150 Louis Street, N. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan. This colorful and delightful gentleman has long been in close touch with the political pulse of Michigan. He was speaker of the house when Groesbeck was Governor, and he was a close friend and ally of the Governor. At present he directs the Welsh Publishing Company in Grand Rapids.

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In the following list, a star is placed by the articles which were of greater moment to this essay.

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