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Clarence Dill: The life of a Western politician

Irish, Kerry Eugene, Ph.D.

University of Washington, 1994

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Clarence Dill:

The Life of a Western Politician

by

Kerry E. Irish

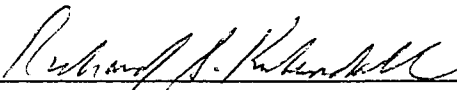
A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1994

Approved by:



(chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

Program Authorized
to Offer Degree

History

Date

23 May 1994

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Abstract

Clarence Dill:
The Life of a Western Politician

by Kerry Irish

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Clarence Dill was a Democratic congressman and senator from Washington in the early twentieth century. This work's primary thesis is that Dill was a typical Westerner in that he valued progress which he defined as the building of the West and the improvement of life for its inhabitants. Moreover, this dissertation, following Bernard Devoto rather than Frederick Turner, develops the argument that the building of the West is best explained as a result of cooperation rather than individualism.

Dill was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1914. While there he was instrumental in opening the Colville Indian Reservation to white settlement. He voted against American entry into W.W.I and was defeated for reelection in 1918.

Dill made a political comeback in 1922 when he defeated Senator Miles Poindexter's bid for reelection. In the twenties Dill became the Senate's expert on radio legislation and guided the development of American communication's law along a middle course: government regulation of communications as opposed to government ownership or private monopoly.

The senator had long been an advocate of public power and dreamed of building Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River. Believing Franklin Roosevelt would support such a project, Dill campaigned for FDR in 1932. As it turned out Dill was the key figure in persuading Roosevelt to build the dam in 1933.

In 1934 Dill spearheaded FDR's effort at a comprehensive communications bill along with Representative Sam Rayburn. Radio's business leaders considered Dill's version of the bill to be an unacceptable extension of government regulation into private business and thus strenuously opposed it. Ultimately Dill was forced to accept the more passive House version.

Dill retired from the Senate in 1935 primarily due to marital difficulties. From 1935 into the 1960's he supported himself as a Spokane attorney specializing

in radio law and public power disputes. He also agitated for construction of Columbia River storage dams in Canada which would maximize the power production of the dams downstream. The dams, approved in 1964, collect flood waters for use in the dry season. Clarence Dill died in Spokane in 1978.

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INTRODUCTION: THE DEFINITION OF A WESTERNER

The romantic Old West has too often preoccupied western historians. Billy the Kid, the Battle of the Little Big Horn, and a host of other violent people and events have received attention well beyond their relative importance. Moreover, such history has perpetuated the idea that the Westerner was an individualistic renegade bent on fulfilling his ambitions regardless of cost. In the novel The Big Sky, A.B. Guthrie's character Boone Caudill is a manifestation of this western stereotype. Caudill is as dangerous to his friends as he is to his enemies, concerned only with the gratification of his appetites, the satisfaction of his whims. Guthrie suggests that little good can come from such men, they cannot build a society. For Guthrie the Boone Caudills of this world are, in a sense, sterile. Guthrie is correct.¹

Here then, is an enigma. How did today's western society, or yesterday's for that matter, come to be if those who laid its foundations were men like Boone Caudill, George Armstrong Custer, or Frederick Jackson Turner's frontiersman? The answer can only be that the men and women who built the West were not like our stereotype above, at least not to the degree posited in the great western myth. Certainly those who built the West were brave - unafraid to take a chance - but they were not the individualistic renegades we have so often glorified as the true builders of the West. In fact, the truth was quite the opposite as Bernard Devoto so graphically illustrated for us when he said that the extreme individualist in the West usually wound up at the swinging end of a rope, while cooperating citizens

¹A.B. Guthrie, The Big Sky (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947).

held the other end fast.² Devoto was challenging Turner's assertion concerning the nature of society found on the American frontier. Richard Hofstadter expanded on Turner's individualistic society, and ultimately argued that Turner's frontier society existed only in very limited terms:

First, a culture may be called individualistic if it offers favorable conditions for the development of personal assertiveness and ambition, encourages material aspiration, self-confidence, and aggressive morale, offers multiple opportunities for advancement and encourages the will to seize them. Second, it may indicate the absence of mutuality or of common and collective effort, in a society that supposedly functions almost as a conglomerate of individual atoms. Third, it may designate a more or less formal creed in which private action is at a premium and government action is condemned - as a synonym, in short, for laissez faire.³

Hofstadter was willing to grant Turner that the first definition of an individualistic society accurately depicts the American frontier, but challenged him on the latter two.⁴ For our purposes, the term individualism is meant to refer to the latter two definitions, especially the first among them. Having defined terms, let us return to those holding fast Devoto's rope.

If we are to believe Devoto, it seems that the real builders of the West have been sadly neglected. Toiling in virtual anonymity, they built a functioning society while the rest of the country thought of the West in terms of hostile Indians and

²As described in, Wallace Stegner and Richard W. Etulain, Conversations With Wallace Stegner on Western History and Literature (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 149.

³Richard Hofstadter. The Progressive Historians (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 141-142. Frederick Jackson Turner. The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1921), 1-38, 254, 259, 271, 273.

⁴Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians, 142-146.

gunfights. But let us not lay the blame for this injustice wholly upon historians.⁵ Books about outlaws, mountain men, and violent clashes sell better than books about railroads, homesteaders and irrigation canals. In any medium, the exciting dominates the mundane, forcing the author to emphasize brief moments of conflict while abbreviating the longer periods of normal life. So too, an historian is ineluctably drawn to the exciting, thus presenting a warped portrait of a time and place. The West of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century has particularly suffered from this malady. Unfortunately for our understanding of the West, that is exactly the period when men and women, cooperating one with another - and assisted by various levels of government - were building the real West.

Perhaps it seems obvious that cooperation was the key to building the West. Truth, once discovered, often seems obvious. But if the truth that cooperation built the West seems indisputable to today's Westerners, it was neither obvious nor easy to accomplish for yesterday's Westerners. Nor was it clear to historians of Turner's era. The West with its immense spaces, vast unlivable lands, and dense forests, had a way of separating people and stunting the growth of civilization. It also had a way of focusing the attention of observers on an admittedly lonely effort to hack a life out of the wilderness. But what the land made difficult, it also made necessary. In order to survive, to grow, to transplant a civilization, the new inhabitants would have to overcome distance and the hostility of the land, they would have to cooperate. And so they did, bringing forth from a rugged yet beautiful land a society which mirrored the struggle: pragmatic and

⁵In the last ten to fifteen years historians have begun to redress this imbalance, however much work remains to be done.

simple, energetic and unsentimental.

Dorothy Johansen argued in A Working Hypothesis for the Study of Migrations that the vast majority of those who came west had similar desires.⁶ One of the those desires was to build a new life and in the process build a new society. The Western mind, then, was set on building, and it stayed set on building well into the twentieth century. It may still be there, though clothed in the garments of modernity. Perhaps in studying one of those builders whose life spanned nearly the entire period from frontier to the present, we can determine whether we may best understand ourselves in terms of contrast, or similarity, to our builder fore-fathers. Let us, then, take a look at one of those cooperating builders.

⁶Dorothy Johansen, "A Working Hypothesis for the Study of Migrations," 40-50. G. Thomas Edwards and Carlos Schwantes, ed., Experiences in a Promised Land: Essays in Pacific Northwest History (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986).

THE MAKING OF A WESTERNER

Clarence Dill's long life had significant impact on American society in the second through fourth decades of this century and profoundly affected his adopted home, the Pacific Northwest. As a congressman from Washington's Fifth district in the years before the United States entered World War I, he worked tirelessly to persuade Americans that Europe's misfortunes were none of our own. In the teens and twenties he was instrumental in changing the face of politics in Washington state. Because of the political realities in his adopted home, which was a haven for conservative democrats and republicans, while also containing a large number of progressives of both parties, Dill - a progressive democrat - was forced to become something of a political maverick. He could never afford to identify too closely with the conservative element of his party for fear of alienating the progressive republicans upon whose cross-over votes he depended for election. During the twenties, Dill deftly gauged the prevailing wind of public opinion concerning prohibition, emphasizing his dry stand when it served his purposes and minimizing his commitment when times had changed. However, his skills as a politician were never more evident than in the 1928 senate election when he convinced a number of leading conservative republicans that he was the smarter choice, rather than their own candidate, if their primary goal were a protective tariff for logs and lumber. Dill's political skills, which featured an ability to gain cooperation from those of diverse interests, were further tested in his work for the federal regulation of radio. In the twenties and thirties, when radio became a national fixture, Dill was that medium's resident expert in the Senate. In radio's early days there were a number of businessmen who would have liked nothing better than to gain ownership of the airwaves and create a monopoly in radio. On the other hand, there were groups which strove equally hard to see radio become

government owned. Dill opposed both sides preferring a system of regulation which would preserve the access of many voices to radio, while retaining the vitality of private ownership. In the trying times of the thirties, radio, by virtue of the fact that Americans from east to west heard many of the same programs and heard their president speak words of assurance, was a unifying force in American life. Clarence Dill had no small hand in creating that force. But his greatest accomplishment was his work in bringing Grand Coulee Dam to Washington. Grand Coulee began the transformation of the Pacific Northwest from a virtual economic colony of the eastern portion of the nation, to a full grown member of the American union. But Dill's work for the development of the Pacific northwest did not end with the building of Grand Coulee. For twenty five years after his retirement from the Senate he strove to create a system of storage dams in Canada which would control flood waters, enhance dam efficiency, and provide cheaper power for the public utility districts he had so long supported. In all these endeavors Dill exemplified the cooperative spirit and builder's mentality so common amongst Americans of the West.

Dill led a long and interesting life. In the pages that follow I hope to reveal that life in a manner which does justice to his accomplishments, without sacrificing his humanity. For Dill was possessed of many of mankind's weaknesses, and not a few of the species' strengths, especially as they manifested themselves in the West of the early twentieth century.

Clarence Dill was born into a family with a rich American heritage. Several of his ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War. One was injured at Brandywine, another was killed at Princeton. His grandfather, Thomas Dill, served in the Pennsylvania militia during the war and sometime afterward moved to Ohio.¹

¹Biographical entry, Clarence Dill Papers (CDP), Eastern Washington State

Eventually Theodore, Clarence's father, was born into the Dill family. Theodore fought for the Union in the Civil War, but somehow escaped becoming a Republican, a fact which would have a profound affect on his son.

Amanda Dill gave birth to her son Clarence on September 21, 1884, the height of the Gilded Age.² This, combined with the fact that Ohio was the political hotbed of the nation during this period, made an indelible mark on the younger Dill. He would always be torn between a career in politics and the desire to make money. The family's poverty and political involvement profoundly influenced the young man as well.

The elder Dill toiled as a tenant farmer on a 223 acre farm just outside Fredericktown, Ohio. Clarence's mother was a devout Christian and hard working farmer's wife, who attended the nearby Methodist church.³ The Dill's were poor even by the standards of the day. Since the Republicans had maintained a firm lock on the White House since the Civil War, Theodore may have favored the politics of the Democratic Party out of a spirit of protest. Certainly the Dills were a family zealous for the party of Andrew Jackson. One of Clarence's fondest memories was of the time he won a bet with another boy over the outcome of the 1892 Presidential election. Dill's father had bought him a baseball cap with Cleveland's name on the front. A Republican friend had a baseball cap with Harrison's name on the front. The two boys bet their hats on the outcome of the election. There is no record of how Dill's mother reacted to the placing of wagers. On the day the election returns were due, Clarence went to the home of a friend

Historical Society, Spokane.

²Ibid.

³Spokesman Review, 4 July 1937.

who had kept a night-long vigil at the telegraph office in order to learn who had won. Informed of Cleveland's victory, young Clarence wasted no time heading to school to collect his baseball cap.⁴

When he was twelve, William Jennings Bryan captivated Clarence with his "Cross of Gold" speech. Much as today's young people idolize sports heroes, Dill set out to master the art of oratory in emulation of Bryan, his hero. The young man would go out to the barn, his collie for an audience, and practice Bryan's great speech. Two years later he had the opportunity to hear Bryan speak at Mansfield, Ohio. Clarence was so impressed with the Great Commoner's speech he went through the reception line twice in order to shake Bryan's hand.⁵

As with most American farm boys, Dill spent many hours behind a plow and doing chores late into the evening. One hot summer afternoon, after having spent the day turning furrows, Clarence made a decision. He did not want to be a farmer; he wanted to go to Congress. As he was plowing on that sultry afternoon, the reluctant farm boy realized that a career in Congress would allow him to combine his love for oratory with his passion for politics.⁶

Dill made no secret of his desire for a congressional career. He was so bold with his ambitions his friends often teased him.⁷ But Fanny Ball, the wife of his father's landlord, encouraged young Clarence in all his aspirations. Mrs. Ball was selling tickets one day to a box social, but Dill could not afford the twenty-five cent ticket price. Mrs. Ball offered to loan the young man the money. But he

⁴Clarence C. Dill, Where Water Falls (Spokane: Self Published, 1970), 14.

⁵Ibid., 16.

⁶Ibid., 17.

⁷Ibid., 19.

replied, "I don't know when I can repay you." She said, "I'll take your note, payable when you make your first speech in Congress."⁸ The ambitious and hungry young man wrote the note.

Dill graduated as Valedictorian of his high school class, and took a job as a country school teacher. While teaching school, he worked on his debating skills and saved money for college. He taught school for two years before he had enough money to enroll in Ohio Wesleyan University in the Autumn of 1903. His mother encouraged him to attend that institution.⁹

While at Ohio Wesleyan, Dill came under the influence of one of the nation's most prominent teachers of public speaking and forensics, Robert Fulton.¹⁰ Under the esteemed professor's tutelage Clarence and fellow student Herb Patterson excelled and made the debate team as Juniors. In their Junior and Senior years Ohio Wesleyan won the state debating championship.

Fulton's public speaking philosophy was to help a speaker overcome obvious deficiencies, thus allowing the speaker's personality to help make the argument. Dill believed his rural upbringing had contributed to a certain stiffness of manner. He decided to take a part-time job as a newspaper reporter in the hope that this would force him to meet people and become more comfortable in the presence of strangers.¹¹

In an effort to expose his students to various speaking styles professor Fulton was in the habit of inviting well known speakers and celebrities to address

⁸Ibid., 21. Inland Empire News, 11 Mar. 1915.

⁹Dill, Where Water Falls, 22. The Journal Herald, n.d., CDP.

¹⁰The Journal Herald, Delaware Ohio, 16 May 1916.

¹¹Ibid., 22.

the class. On one occasion Fulton persuaded William Jennings Bryan to make an appearance. It was one of the highlights of Dill's college career. Bryan instructed the young debaters to train their voices so that the audience would never have to listen, they could not help but hear. Bryan also advised the students to learn when to stop. He said, "Never talk too long. Leave your audience hungry rather than overfed. So they can be saying to themselves, 'I wish he had gone on,' instead of, 'Thank God he quit.'"¹²

While Dill worshipped Fulton, he could be critical of other professors. When he was a Junior, he and several other students printed a handbill which ridiculed some of the college's faculty. This activity was not well received, and the offended parties wanted the culprits expelled. At a faculty meeting Fulton rose and defended Dill, saying that the young man was earnest and ambitious - so much so that he was working his way through college. Fulton then predicted his student would someday be one of the college's most distinguished alumni. For whatever reason, Dill and his friends were not expelled.¹³

In 1905, while working as a reporter, Dill was assigned to travel to Marion, Ohio to investigate the murder of a Cleveland man. He took the interurban thirty miles north to Marion. Upon arriving in the city Clarence questioned a police officer concerning the murder. The policeman suggested that since the investigating officers had all gone home, the best place to learn about the murder was probably the office of the publisher of the local newspaper. Dill thanked the police officer and proceeded to follow his advice. Entering the dingy paper strewn office, Dill apologized to the editor and publisher of the Marion Star and

¹²Ibid., 25.

¹³Ibid., 27.

proceeded to explain his dilemma. He related in his memoirs that he did not have any idea how to write the murder story. The kindly editor told him to take the news story that his reporter had already written and use it in whatever way suited him. The editor also gave the young reporter some names of people to contact concerning the murder. Elated, Dill offered to pay for the information but the editor refused saying, "No, no. I'm really glad if I've helped you." Dill thanked the editor again and said, "I hope I can write you a story some day to help you become Governor." Warren G. Harding responded, "I'm afraid it will be a long time before I am so honored."¹⁴

Dill graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1907 with a Bachelor of Letters Degree. He decided to take advantage of his newspaper experience and so secured a job working on the Cleveland Press.¹⁵ Several weeks went by during which few of the rookie reporter's stories were published. A few weeks later the editor called Dill into his office and let him go. Clarence asked him what was wrong with his work, and the editor replied, "You just don't know news."¹⁶

The young college graduate was depressed but determined not to give up. The latter was a trait which would serve him well in the years to come. He landed a job with the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Unfortunately he had the same problem working for that paper. But he stumbled into a story about a girl who had been a barroom dancer since the age of ten, and at the age of seventeen was suing for back wages. The human interest angle was hard to miss, even for a reporter fresh out of college. The story was well received, and taught Dill how to write for a

¹⁴Ibid., 24.

¹⁵Lloyd Spencer and Lancaster Pollard, A History of the State of Washington (New York: American Historical Society, 1937), 443.

¹⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 28.

newspaper. Not long after, the Cleveland Press offered Dill his old job at a higher wage. He took it, and with it came the opportunity to cover Tom Johnson's campaign for mayor of Cleveland.¹⁷

Dill learned a great deal covering Johnson's campaign. He noticed how Johnson used humor to deflect pointed questions until the questioner was willing to accept almost any answer.¹⁸ The young reporter also observed that Johnson had the ability to actually convert opponents. On one occasion Johnson met with over one hundred preachers who were upset that he had failed to close saloons in the big hotels and city clubs on Sundays. Johnson responded that he had closed the saloons along the waterfront on Sundays first because the families of the men who frequented those saloons were most in need of the money spent there. Johnson went on to explain that he lacked policemen to close all the saloons at once, but if reelected, he promised to close them all. Whether or not Johnson's selective closing of saloons on Sunday represented manpower realities as he claimed (his sympathetic biographer admits Johnson was not above twisting the truth) or was an example of how progressivism targeted the lower classes for reform, the ministers left saying, "Tom's alright."¹⁹

In covering Johnson's campaign Dill's predilection toward progressive political opinions could only have been reinforced, taken as he was with Johnson's campaign style and oratorical ability. Tom L. Johnson was perhaps the foremost

¹⁷Robert D. Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1966), 343.

¹⁸Carl Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1911), 88-89.

¹⁹Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement in Washington," 343. Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, 138. Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, Progressivism (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1983), 96-104. Dill, Where Water Falls, 30.

proponent of urban progressivism in the early twentieth century. Lincoln Steffens wrote that he was the "best mayor of the best governed city in the United States."²⁰ Johnson was a disciple and associate of Henry George and as such advocated many of the author's ideas.²¹ Among these were the single tax and municipal ownership of utilities. The Mayor, then, was a champion of the common man advocating measures such as a street car fare of no more than three cents.²² But Johnson was also a wealthy man, very much a product of the Gilded Age. He was careful to protect his own wealth and even argued publicly that he felt free to profit from his investments in monopolies as long as monopolies were allowed. The irony was that in the next breath he lambasted the existence of monopolies.²³ As we shall see, Clarence Dill came to be very much like Tom L. Johnson: able to get along with a wide spectrum of people, progressive in political ideology, but determined to make money along the way.

When Dill went to work in Cleveland, he knew that it was only temporary. He had told professor Fulton that he intended to move to the Pacific Northwest at some point. Fulton asked him why and Dill responded, "Because it is a new and developing country and it has had a lure for me for several years."²⁴ A cousin who had visited the region had written home extolling the pristine virtues of the Willamette Valley in particular and the Pacific Northwest in general. Dill was impressed. Fulton shook his hand and said, "I'm sure you'll be able to go to

²⁰Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, 20.

²¹Ibid., 16.

²²Ibid., 30.

²³Ibid., 33.

²⁴Dill, Where Water Falls, 27.

Congress from that country. . ."²⁵ Dill had retained the dream throughout his college years and now was about to embark on a search for a place in which the dream might become reality, a place "with freedom, an active outdoor life, a place with the excitement of something mighty to be built."²⁶

Dill soon discovered that reality has a way of setting in before one expects. For various reasons, not the least of which was economic, he spent the winter of 1907-08 teaching school in Dubuque, Iowa.²⁷ After completing the school year, he decided to attend the Democratic National Convention in Denver in the summer of 1908, where his hero, William Jennings Bryan, was nominated to be the Democrat's standard bearer for the third time. It was the first of over a dozen national political conventions Dill attended.²⁸ From Denver, he intended to continue his journey to the Pacific Northwest.

After the convention the would be congressman took the Union Pacific down the Columbia Gorge; standing at the rear of the observation car, he looked at the great river for the first time. The white water of the Columbia fascinated the young man as did majestic Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams. But Dill was not impressed with Portland. It was a beautiful city; that was not the problem. Or in a way, it was the problem. Dill was looking, without really realizing it, for a frontier city. Portland was already old. In his memoirs, Dill describes it as "more like an Eastern, than a Western city." He decided to go north to Tacoma and Seattle, but

²⁵Ibid., 28.

²⁶Wallace Stegner, Angle of Repose, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1971), 383.

²⁷Spencer and Pollard, History of the State of Washington, 443.

²⁸Spokesman Review, 4 July 1937.

was equally disappointed with those cities. He later wrote that he was unable to see the future possibilities for development in either of the two cities on the Sound. This, of course, implies that he was looking for a city with which to grow, a city that would provide an opportunity for an ambitious young man to make his way in politics.

The coastal cities, Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, were a bit of a shock to a young man expecting to discover clear opportunities. Brick buildings several stories high, paved streets, mass transportation, and street lights, all spoke of well established societies. A builder at heart, Dill could see no future in cities which appeared to be already built. Moreover, a power structure three generations old would make it difficult to crack the political establishments of the coastal cities. Hence Dill's disappointment with these "Eastern" metropolises. The young man, a frontiersman at heart, turned his eyes toward Spokane, and journeyed to that eastern Washington city with the idea that if it did not seem to provide the opportunity that he was looking for, he would head east to Minnesota and take the newspaper job a friend had offered him.²⁹

It was a sunny morning in July, 1908, when Dill left the Northern Pacific depot and headed for downtown Spokane. He wrote in Where Water Falls:

I thought I had never seen such white sunlight, nor breathed such invigorating air. After eating my breakfast, I walked through the business section to the bridge overlooking the falls of the Spokane River, and talked to a policeman and some other people on the streets, I decided here was where I wanted to live and go to Congress.³⁰

²⁹In 1915 Seattle had a population of over 300,000, while Portland was larger still. Spokane had about 125,000 people. Spencer and Pollard, A History of the State of Washington, 444.

³⁰Dill, Where Water Falls, 33.

Dill had come West in search of the frontier, and was disappointed when he did not find it in Portland and Seattle. Spokane, less developed than the western cities, though clearly well past the frontier stage, more readily suited Dill's purposes. Nevertheless, it must have taken some self persuasion - lost to his memory in the intervening years - that Spokane would in fact offer the future he dreamt of. If he had been aware of one of Frederick Jackson Turner's theses concerning the frontier (among other things, Turner argued that the frontier was better described as alive with innovation as opposed to consisting of Eastern continuity), Dill would have agreed.³¹ The prospects for innovation would have excited him, nevertheless he was determined to build the new society in the image of the old. In this determination he was no different than most of his contemporaries.

Spokane was already the Queen of the Inland Empire when Clarence Dill arrived. Railroads - the lifeblood of many western towns - had made the city a booming service center: marketing, transportation, jobbing, shopping, medicine, and education were all available in abundance.³² The men and women who had preceded Dill to Spokane and had built the city were very much like the young man who had jumped off the train that July morning in 1908. Though the city by the Falls was two to three decades behind the Puget Sound cities, it had a core of boosters and builders possessed of great ambitions for its economic growth and aesthetic beauty.

Those builders included D.C. Corbin who had made a fortune in short line railroads; mining had enriched F. Lewis Clark and Charles Sweeney; Patrick

³¹Stegner and Etulain, Conversations With Wallace Stegner, 145.

³²Lucille Fargo, Spokane Story (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 258.

Welch had grown wealthy as a railroad contractor; David Ham, something of a dandy, had grown rich through real estate; and Aubrey White settled in Spokane with a fortune of perhaps half a million dollars. But the most important and influential of Spokane's creators was William H. Cowles, editor and publisher of three of Spokane's daily newspapers. Cowles had arrived in Spokane in 1891 as a partner in, and business manager of, the Spokesman. He gradually bought out his partners and in 1894 purchased The Review. In 1897 he was able to gain control of the Spokane Chronicle. As the last years of the nineteenth century passed, Cowles emerged as the most powerful man in Eastern Washington. John Fahey, an historian of the Inland Empire, wrote, "Politicians sought his endorsement, businessmen his blessing, and publicists his cooperation."³³

Cowles, White, and the other leaders of Spokane were not just concerned with the city's economic future. They were determined that Spokane be a beautiful city - highly livable - as well as economically prosperous. When it was obvious that land in the city was growing both scarce and more expensive, Cowles and White led an effort to purchase land for city parks. In addition, White (President of the Park Board) hired the Olmsted brothers, well known landscape architects, to plan the city's park system. He also persuaded the city council to plant 80,000 trees in the city.³⁴ Such were the men and women of Spokane, cooperating to build the leading city in Eastern Washington. John Fahey describes their contribution: "Newspapers called them 'progressive' men, and every town that

³³John Fahey, The Inland Empire: Unfolding Years, 1879-1929. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 217. In addition to the quote, I am indebted to Fahey for most of the information in this paragraph.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 217.

would amount to anything had them."³⁵

Clarence Dill had decided to make Spokane his home, but there was some question as to whether or not Spokane wanted him. The unemployed reporter applied for work at the various newspapers, and visited them nearly every day in order to land any available job. No one seemed interested in hiring him, but he was able to strike up a friendship with the assistant editor of the Spokesman-Review, Charley Hart. The two men had a mutual acquaintance that Dill embellished in order to win Hart's favor. Days went by, still Clarence remained without a job. He made plans to use his return ticket to get to St. Paul, and to work in a wheat field for a week in order to raise traveling money. The day before he was to go to work shocking wheat, he received a phone call from Hart. The editor asked the nearly desperate young man if he still wanted a job. Dill replied, "I most certainly do." Hart told him to get down to the office right away.³⁶

Elated, Dill virtually flew down to the newspaper office. Hart wanted him to work as the Spokesman-Review's police reporter. Based on his previous experience, the young reporter was confident that he could do the job. A few weeks had gone by when Malcolm Glendenning, editor of the paper, asked him to do a story on how the saloon men of Spokane intended to vote in the upcoming gubernatorial election. Whoever the saloon men favored would draw the wrath of the prohibitionists among whom was W.H. Cowles. Glendenning suspected that the saloon men would not recognize Dill as a Spokesman-Review employee, and thus gave him the assignment and five dollars to be used to provide liquid refreshments in hope the libations would loosen the tongues of the saloon men.

³⁵Ibid., 5.

³⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 33.

Dill's work among the saloon men was so successful that he had to go home and lie down for a few hours before he could write the story.³⁷

Dill's "research" revealed that the saloon men favored Republican Henry McBride, a former governor of the state. The young reporter's story was printed on the front page of the Spokesman-Review on August 27, 1908, nearly two weeks before the primary election. McBride lost.³⁸

In addition to canvassing local drinking establishments, Dill's work for Cowles eventually included writing some of the latter's editorials. In the fall of 1908 Dill accepted a position as an English teacher and debate coach at South Central High School in Spokane. It was during this time that he wrote several editorials for Cowles.³⁹ In his spare time, he also read law under the instruction of J.W. Graves, a Spokane lawyer and fraternity brother. Dill spent most of his evenings and Saturdays studying law.⁴⁰ Obviously, he was not content to dream about going to Congress, he worked hard to prepare himself to go there. But he did not forget about the people he left behind in Ohio. His mother told a Spokesman-Review reporter in July 1937 that her son had faithfully written her a letter once a week.

Dill enjoyed his work at South Central High School, especially his role as debate coach, despite the fact the job only paid one hundred dollars a month. When he resigned his position in 1910, the school yearbook described him as one

³⁷Ralph Dyer, News For An Empire (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1952), 144-145. Dill, Where Water Falls, 34-35.

³⁸Spokesman-Review, 27 August 1908, 1. Dyer, News For An Empire, 145.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁰Dill, Where Water Falls, 35.

of the most hard working and conscientious debate coaches the school had ever had. He was credited with training several of the best debaters to ever come out of the School.⁴¹

In 1910 Dill felt ready to pass the bar exam. He journeyed to Olympia where he took the written exam on the first day. Shocked to find his name missing from the list of those who had passed, and afraid that the bar exam now represented a serious barrier on his road to Congress, he asked the Chief Examiner just how poorly he had performed. The examiner replied, "I'm sure you passed. I graded your papers." The Chief Examiner looked again at the official list of those who had passed. The list had been folded at the top, and whoever had copied it for posting had not seen Clarence Dill's name at the very top; far from failing, the former school teacher had the highest score of the day.⁴²

One of the first things Dill had done after making Spokane his home was to become involved with the local Democratic Party. Had his employer, William Cowles, been aware of this he would not have been pleased. His work with the party paid off soon after he passed the bar. As a lawyer in private practice, Dill was barely able to make ends meet. Fortunately, the elected chairman of the Democratic County Committee, Thomas A. Scott, appointed Dill Secretary of the Committee with the responsibility of managing the county campaign. The young lawyer at first declined, but when Scott informed him that the position carried a one hundred and fifty dollar a month salary, the pragmatic Dill immediately agreed to fill the position.

It was a good match for both parties. For the first time in many years the

⁴¹Copy of Yearbook page, CDP.

⁴²Spencer and Pollard, A History of the State of Washington, 443. Dill, Where Water Falls, 36.

Democrats elected four county officials, a prosecuting attorney, and a county commissioner. The new prosecuting attorney, John Wiley, made Dill an assistant prosecuting attorney at one hundred and seventy five dollars a month. Aware of his inexperience, Dill asked for responsibilities he knew something about: police court attorney. He felt confident that his reservoir of experience as a police reporter would stand him in good stead. Moreover, his new position provided him the opportunity to inform newspaper reporters about human interest cases he would be handling in court. He later wrote, "This enabled me to get more publicity about myself than anyone else in the prosecutor's office."⁴³

The gregarious Dill rose quickly in the Democratic party. At the Jefferson-Jackson Day Celebration of 1912, he made a "bang-up corking good Jacksonian and Jeffersonian spiel."⁴⁴ The speech impressed more than newspaper reporters, the party's Central Committee asked him to be the temporary chairman of the State Democratic Convention to be held in the spring.⁴⁵ Dill went into the year favoring Woodrow Wilson for the presidency and even involved himself in forming Washington's Wilson League. But Speaker of the House Champ Clark, who was favored to win the nomination, had strong support in Spokane. Dill backed away from Wilson and made it known he favored William Jennings Bryan.⁴⁶ The Wilson and Clark forces were all but irreconcilable, especially in Washington state, but neither side considered a Bryan man a foe. Dill was positioning himself so as to avoid making enemies. Or perhaps Charles Heifner, leader of Wilson's supporters,

⁴³Ibid., 38.

⁴⁴Seattle Star, 28 January 1913.

⁴⁵Seattle P.I., 10 March 1912.

⁴⁶Spokesman-Review, 31 August 1912.

was positioning Dill to be of service at the state convention in an effort to head off the Clark forces.

Heifner's Wilson backers won the first battle and were able to schedule the convention for May 1912.⁴⁷ The Clark men had hoped to postpone the gathering in order to use the time to become better organized. Petty conflict marred the convention, held in Walla Walla. Dill, as temporary chairman, gave a speech which for a moment united the convention forces against the real enemy - Teddy Roosevelt and the progressive Republicans. Dill had a reputation for oratory and his speech at the convention did nothing to damage that reputation. In his oration, he fired broadsides at Teddy Roosevelt and the Republicans. He accused Roosevelt of being long on words and short on action, possessed of incredible egotism in his desire for a third term, and a tool of big business. Then Clarence cut loose at President Taft at equally close range ending with these words:

Never before since the Civil War has there been so general an agreement as to leaders, issues and opportunities of and in the Democratic party as there is today. The Democratic party is the only party that was born with the nation and it will survive as long as the nation endures. It has survived every defeat and recovered from every disaster, because it has always had a great ideal. That ideal has been a government that would permit special privileges to none and guarantee equal rights to all. The insurgent Republicans should join the Democratic party. Until they do they can be no more than a Red Cross brigade to stanch the political wounds caused by a system of special privilege in the form of a high protective tariff and obedient allegiance to big business.

Bound to the past only as it is based on those principles which are the foundations stones of truly representative government, the Democratic party confidently looks to the future. The triumph of these principles as shown by the nation-wide awakening of the people to their rights and their powers is but a herald of the great victory that will soon crown the efforts of that band of progressive leaders who have upheld the cause of the common people so nobly and so long.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Seattle P.I., 10 March 1912.

⁴⁸Dill's address at the Democratic State Convention, Walla Walla

Impressed with Dill's oratory, and previously unable to agree on a permanent chairman, the Clark and Wilson forces settled on Clarence in that position. The fact he was perceived as a Bryan advocate smoothed the way for his ascension.⁴⁹

After clearing away petty disagreements such as which delegation from King County would be seated (a recurring King County problem in this era, as we shall note in later pages), the conventioners proceeded to the task before them.⁵⁰ It did not take long for the more numerous Clark forces to gain the upper hand. Apparently facing defeat, Heifner and the Wilson forces attempted to stampede the convention for Bryan. They narrowly missed their goal.⁵¹ What role the convention chairman played in the attempted stampede can only be guessed, but it is at least conceivable that Heifner and the Wilson forces wanted a man in the chairmanship sympathetic to their candidate. Dill, before his change of heart, had been a Wilson man.

Dill went to Baltimore to attend the Democratic National Convention. He claimed, in his memoirs, that he was a delegate, but the Seattle P.I. does not list him as one.⁵² Of course, it is possible that he replaced a delegate and was in fact correct in his autobiography. It is also possible that when he sat down to write his memoirs 58 years later he had simply forgotten what his role had been.

There is no doubt, however, that Dill went to the convention. He wrote notes of his experiences in Baltimore, the most interesting of which were his

Washington, 6 May 1912, CDP.

⁴⁹Seattle P.I., 7 May 1912, 1.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 8 May 1912, 1.

⁵²Ibid.

comments concerning William J. Bryan's speech nominating John W. Kern of Indiana. Bryan whipped the crowd to a frenzy with the words, "He never sold the truth to save the hour. Those words were spoken of the hero of Monticello, and I could not feel myself worthy to claim to be a follower of his, if I today were willing to sell the truth to save the present hour." He continued, "I appeal to you as delegates, let the commencement of this convention be such a commencement that the Democrats of this country may raise their heads among their fellows and say 'the Democratic Party is true to the people.' You cannot frighten it with your Ryans, nor buy it with your Belmonts."⁵³ Dill believed, as did several reporters he spoke to, that if Bryan had quit speaking at that moment, the convention might have gone as he wished. But Bryan had lost his touch. He continued to speak until the crowd deserted him. Dill learned a valuable lesson, a lesson Bryan himself had stressed to Dill as a young college debater, but had apparently forgotten himself: know when to quit.⁵⁴

Dill returned home and worked for various Democratic candidates. It was a competitive field that vied for the Democratic party's nomination for governor in 1912. Ernest Lister, of Pierce County, was the front runner, while W.W. Black, a judge from Snohomish County, was also a strong contender. Five other candidates sought the nomination as well. As the September primary drew near, most of the candidates attacked the front-running Lister resulting in Black's victory.⁵⁵ However, the State Supreme Court declared that Black was ineligible to serve as Washington's governor because the Washington State Constitution prohibited a

⁵³Notes on Democratic National Convention, CDP.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Spokesman-Review, 3 September 1912, 5. Ibid., 27 September 1912, 1.

sitting judge from running for political office. Lister took Black's place on the ballot.⁵⁶ The Seattle P.I. considered Lister an amiable fellow, but did not give him much chance in the general election since the Democrats had so completely bungled the selection of a candidate through their "ignorance of the State Constitution."⁵⁷

However, Lister paid little attention to the Seattle P.I. He attacked Governor Hay's spending record which he termed "extravagant" and reminded voters how progressive Governor Rogers had been without engaging in excessive spending.⁵⁸ Lister even quoted the Wall Street Journal's assertion that Washington State was fiscally mismanaged.⁵⁹ The Seattle P.I. trumpeted Hay's response to Lister's attacks. Hay claimed the Democrats were misrepresenting his record and cited the passage of progressive legislation such as the direct primary law, women's suffrage, and workmen's compensation.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Lister won the election with a plurality of fewer than seven hundred votes.⁶¹ In the presidential election, Teddy Roosevelt swept the state - making Lister's election all the more remarkable.

As mentioned above, Clarence Dill had worked for Democratic candidates

⁵⁶Seattle P.I., 19 October 1912, 8.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., 17 October 1912, 4. The Evening Record (Ellensburg), 22 October 1912, 1.

⁵⁹Wall Street Journal, 28 September 1912, 1.

⁶⁰Seattle P.I., 29 October 1912, 1.

⁶¹Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of Washington in the General Election 5 November 1912. Olympia: Government Printing Office.

in the fall election. He had also provided Lister with at least a modicum of prominence at the state Democratic Party Convention back in May when he had appointed Lister Sergeant at Arms. Lister, in need of a private secretary with well developed diplomatic skills, chose Dill for the honor. The new governor remembered how the young man had so skillfully handled his duties at the convention. In Olympia the Democrats would be substantially outnumbered. If Lister were to get anything done he could not afford to antagonize the opposition unnecessarily. Thus Dill was an excellent choice.⁶²

Upon his arrival in the Capital, Lister took his young secretary aside and told him, "There is talk of a recount. My lead is only 624 votes, I don't want a recount. There might be that many actual mistakes." The Governor then told Dill to be especially attentive to the Republican leaders of the House and Senate, Ed Sims and Pliny Allen, respectively. Dill successfully followed Lister's command.⁶³

Both friend and foe alike agreed that Ernest Lister was a masterful politician. He skillfully maneuvered legislation such as the congressional redistricting bill through the legislature in spite of the fact that his party was in the minority. Dill, apparently calling due some favors, assisted the governor with this particular legislation.

The 1910 census mandated the creation of two new congressional districts in the state of Washington. Dill, of course, hoped that one of those districts would include Spokane. Obviously the Republicans could not draw the districts so as to place a Republican incumbent in each one - there were not enough Republican incumbents to go around. The best they could hope for was to create districts which had a solid record of Republican strength. Spokane had never sent a

⁶²Seattle Star, 28 January 1913. Dill, Where Water Falls, 41.

⁶³Ibid.

Democrat to the nation's capital. Allen and Sims were more than willing to pay off old debts with what appeared to be a rubber check.⁶⁴ They agreed to draw Washington's new Fifth district so as to leave it without an incumbent. Besides, the real fighting over the re-districting legislation was over the form of Seattle's congressional district, and over the state legislature's lines. The fighting was bitter, and did not follow party lines as much as it resembled an urban versus rural fight.⁶⁵ The issue was not decided until the last night of the legislative session: the Fifth district survived as Dill hoped.⁶⁶

When Dill came to Olympia to serve as Lister's secretary, it was with the understanding that he would only serve for a few months. With the passage of the redistricting legislation, Dill - the builder - and aspirant to Congress, had what he really wanted: a clean shot at a congressional seat. Shortly after the legislative session, Dill informed Lister of his intent to return home in order to prepare for the congressional campaign of 1914. In the meantime, he intended to support himself with his private law practice.⁶⁷

As a party organizer, chairman of the state Democratic convention, and governor's secretary, Dill had demonstrated the ability to reconcile opposing groups while positioning himself for advancement. His talents were widely recognized within the state; so much so that Jim Ford, a columnist with the Spokesman-Review, wrote of them in less than flattering terms, making those

⁶⁴Ibid., 42.

⁶⁵Seattle P.I. 21 February 1913, 1. Olympia Daily Recorder, 20 February 1913, 4.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Spokesman-Review, 25 May 1913, 3. Clarence C. Dill to Mr. B.F. Kunkel, 30 July 1913. CDP.

abilities sound like character flaws.⁶⁸ Ford recalled how Dill had possessed the audacity to say nice things about some Republicans, had waffled between Champ Clark's forces and Wilson's in the early stages of the presidential campaign, and essentially argued Dill cared for nothing except his own political advancement. Ultimately Ford's point was to cast Dill as absurdly trying to create harmony amongst those of all political persuasions. But in order to win the Fifth district's congressional seat, Dill would need all of the diplomatic skills and charisma Ford so uncharitably criticized in order to persuade enough Republicans to vote for him.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Jim Ford's column, Spokesman - Review, 31 August 1912.

⁶⁹Ibid.

TESTING THE WATERS

Dill spent the last half of 1913 in private law practice in Spokane. In his spare time he prepared for the congressional race of 1914. He took every opportunity to speak that came his way; those who attended ladies' clubs, business clubs, social functions, and political get togethers all saw and heard a great deal of Clarence Dill. The twenty nine year old would-be congressman had long been a student of elections. He had seen Tom Johnson handle crowds and Ernest Lister maneuver colleagues; he had also spent a great deal of time studying elections of the past.¹ Dill was prepared to endure ceaseless work in order to make his dream come true. It was a good thing that he was. For the Fifth district was huge and would require a significant amount of physical stamina in order to campaign effectively. Winning the fall election would also test Dill's ability to appeal to a wide cross section of Americans: farmers, laborers, city dwellers, women, Republicans and Democrats; the ambitious transplanted Ohioan would need votes from all these groups to defeat his challengers.

The congressional district Dill hoped to represent consisted of Chelan, Okanogan, Douglas, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend D' Oreille, and Spokane counties. It was, in effect, the entire northeastern corner of Washington. Farming and logging were the mainstays of the economy and had led to the establishment of small towns which grew slowly in the valleys, largely isolated from the outside world. The largest city, Dill's home town of Spokane, sported a fashionable new residential district on the west side where many of the town's leaders lived. These leaders were conservative in philosophy and Republican in party. The region had never sent a Democrat to Washington D.C.

¹Box 1, Folder, "Election Returns", CDP, EWSHS, Spokane.

Though William La Follette, the Republican incumbent, was now in the Fourth district, Clarence faced other obstacles besides the sheer size of his chosen home.² The same circumstances which excited Dill caused other political aspirants to salivate: a new congressional district with no incumbent. All told sixteen men filed as candidates in the Fifth district; Dill faced three other attorneys from Spokane in the Democratic primary, two minor party candidates, and ten Republicans.³

Dill kicked off the new year with a speech dedicating Newport's City Hall. He argued that the small home towns of America were the backbone of the country, and urged his listeners to support local businesses and education, and to become involved in local politics in order to enhance and preserve their own interests. In these sentiments Dill sought to tie the people of Newport emotionally to his personality and candidacy. But he was doing more than fishing for votes. He had fond memories of his childhood and home, and while he had come west to build a life and hopefully contribute to a region, he also hoped to recreate for himself the kind of home he had known in his youth. That home included more than family, friends, and familiar surroundings, it extended to the activities Clarence had enjoyed as a boy: hunting, fishing, and in general, the outdoors.

In March of 1914, Dill resigned his position as vice chairman of the State Democratic Central Committee, thus clearing the decks so as to be free to maneuver in whatever manner the winds of politics dictated.⁴ In April, at the Stevens County Jefferson Day Banquet, he took on one of his challengers for the

²Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement in Washington," 344.

³Spokesman-Review, 6 September 1914. Spokane Chronicle, 10 August 1914.

⁴*Ibid.*, 16 March 1914.

Democratic party's nomination, and was - according to the Colville Examiner - victorious: "The address by Mr. Dill was the most pleasing event of the evening. He is not only a capable speaker but shows a sincerity of purpose and a clear perception of the true aims of democracy. He is a young man vigorous and aggressive. . ." ⁵

Dill formally announced his candidacy on 30 April 1914, and took the opportunity to define himself for his constituency:

There are just two conceptions of government. One is based on the idea that the power to perform public service comes up from the great common people; the other, on the idea that it comes down from a superior authority. The public official who believes that society is built up from the bottom will always be found fighting for the interests of the masses of mankind, while the public official who believes society is suspended from above, will work primarily for the interests of the well-to-do, and then wait and hope for the benefits to sift through to those below. ⁶

Dill was identifying himself with the tradition of Jefferson, Jackson, and with the President, Woodrow Wilson. In this effort he sought to both benefit from, and support the political philosophies of, the great men of the Democratic party.

As much as he admired these men and their achievements, it was Dill's desire to see the Democratic party become the party of progressivism. Progressivism was practically inbred in Clarence Dill. As shown above, William Jennings Bryan had been a boyhood hero, while Tom Johnson, the renowned progressive mayor of Cleveland, had made a profound impact on the young man when Clarence had covered one of his campaigns. For Dill, progressivism both explained and offered solutions to the nation's problems. Dill and other progressives, millions of men and women of nearly all descriptions, saw American

⁵Colville Examiner, 18 April 1914.

⁶Spokane Chronicle, 30 April 1914.

society in rather simplistic terms. Progressives believed that the forces of compassion and justice were in conflict with those manning the ramparts of greed and reaction. The former were those who possessed fewer of the world's goods, generally farmers, labor, and small merchants, along with their more educated advocates, while the latter were the wealthy, or at least prosperous, owners and managers of business. Seeing the world in these terms, it naturally followed that political equality necessitated at least a narrowing of the range of economic diversity, as wealth so clearly provided political power. At the same time it seemed obvious to progressives that the nature of society was beyond the control of the individual, only government could hope to wield enough power to produce a more equal distribution of wealth and thus political power.

Progressives, then, came to reject what Alan Dawley calls the "individualism of the marketplace," preferring a system in which government, as the agent of the common people, created a more egalitarian society. Looked at from a different perspective, one might say progressives rejected the philosophy of laissez faire preferring what they believed was a more humane pragmatism. It is important to note, however, that progressives were not socialists, much to the chagrin of the socialists of the day and some later observers. Rather, committed to a "cross-alliance [a combination of diverse aspects of society] aimed at remaking the liberal state, they hoped to restore social harmony without overturning the foundations of private property or family life."⁷ In our attempt to understand Clarence Dill, it is crucial to keep his concept of what progressivism was in mind. Even after the progressive era had clearly passed, Dill referred to himself as a progressive. He believed in the progressive ideas expressed in Herbert Croly's The

⁷Alan Dawley. Struggles For Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1991), 99.

Promise of American Life, while Upton Sinclair's rejection of the capitalist system as evidenced in The Jungle would not have appealed to him.⁸

Dill also hoped to benefit from the work of the less well known suffragette leader of the Inland Empire, May Arkwright Hutton. Instrumental in bringing the vote to women in Idaho in 1896, Hutton repeated her work in Washington in 1910. In 1914, she was a respected member of the Democratic party and an advocate for women's issues.⁹ Aware of his need for every conceivable vote, Dill sought to take advantage of the new element in Washington State politics - women.

Early in 1914, Dill was seeing Helene Morrissey, a young woman of Irish descent, who taught school in Spokane. He sought her advice on how he might best impress women voters. Reluctant to instruct the young candidate, Helene claimed to know nothing about politics. Clarence was slightly miffed and said, "I'm disappointed in you. You're Irish and the Irish take to politics like a cat to cream and you're a woman and women know things by instinct, yet you plead ignorance." Dill's comment triggered Helene's Irish temper, "All right, I'll tell you one thing. A woman does not like a man who is conceited and she won't vote for him. Now don't you forget that." Dill replied, "But I am conceited or I would not be running for Congress before I am thirty years old." Helene now finished him off, "I know it. That's why I said that."¹⁰

Dill took his girlfriend's advice and made a concerted effort to avoid

⁸Herbert Croly. The Promise of American Life (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963). Upton Sinclair. The Jungle (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

⁹Benjamin Kizer, "May Arkwright Hutton," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 57 (April 1966): 54.

¹⁰Dill, Where Water Falls, 45.

appearing conceited. Moreover, he deliberately set out to garner the women's vote and to enlist women as workers in his campaign. In his effort to gain those votes Dill often went door to door. He would introduce himself and apologize for bothering the lady of the house, then proceed to explain that since women were eligible to vote for the first time this year, he wanted to make himself as well known as possible to them. He went on to explain that he had been born on a farm in Ohio, worked his way through college, and studied law at night while teaching school during the day. If he had the opportunity he added that the newspapers, being all Republican in sympathy, gave him little coverage. Therefore, he was essentially reduced to personal appearances and private contacts.¹¹ Dill found this strategy worked wonders; wherever he went he left women who were intending to vote for C. C. Dill.

In June, Clarence took his campaign on the road hitting every town that had some form of transportation to it. He preferred to travel on the train, but even then the days were hot and long, the hotels cheap and uncomfortable. When trains were not available, he took whatever means of transportation he could find over dusty, back-jarring roads. He sometimes speculated on which would give out first: man or machine. As the wheat fields rolled by, he must have often wondered if all his efforts would pay-off, or whether his dreams of going to Congress would disappear like wind-driven chaff.

The young politician had a strategy to gain the votes of men as well as women. In Marcus, Washington, Dill asked the hotel keeper if he knew who might be persuaded to introduce him to the men in the business district, the hotel keeper responded, "Go alone. You'll get more attention then." Dill followed the man's

¹¹Ibid.

advice and later noticed that when someone introduced him to a friend, invariably the conversation centered on the two acquaintances and not on the prospective congressman. He made it a point to introduce himself whenever possible.¹²

Dill devoted a great deal of time to the outlying areas of the district. After he had spoken in Hillyard to Democrats organizing a club to support Wilson and other Democratic candidates, the Inland Empire News reported favorably on his speech, but less so on the other congressional Democratic candidate at the meeting. Dill was distancing himself from his competition. As June turned to July, he toured the northern portion of the district, following his separate strategy for men and women. He reported at a meeting of the Spokane Democratic Central Committee, "People up there who have taken no part in politics for ten years tell me they are going to vote the Democratic ticket this year."¹³

In August, half a world away, the outbreak of World War I had an almost immediate impact on the congressional campaign in the Fifth district. On 5 August, in keeping with his campaign theme of support for President Wilson, Dill argued Americans were indeed fortunate a man of peace occupied the White House.¹⁴

Meanwhile Dill's Republican opponents lamented that the new primary system opened the door to public office to anyone, and that the resulting large number of candidates bewildered the public. In response, Dill claimed the new

¹²Ibid., 46.

¹³In fairness to the newspapers of the Inland Empire, it should be noted that while the coverage they gave Dill was not always favorable, it was not nonexistent as he sometimes claimed. Spokesman-Review, 10 July 1914. Spokane Chronicle, 10 July 1914.

¹⁴Spokane Chronicle, 5 August 1914.

primary law was here to stay, and rightfully so, for it encouraged the common people to involve themselves in government and therefore furthered democracy.¹⁵

Getting people involved was a Dill strength. Asked to speak to a group of firemen's wives, he instructed the ladies on how to be sure they could vote for the Democratic candidate in the primary election. Then he encouraged the women to persuade one or two friends to vote for him as well. Excited to be involved in the political process, many of the women promised they would deliver substantially more than one or two friendly votes. Dill warned the women the task might be more difficult than they suspected, but the women were undaunted. They not only proceeded to influence friends to vote for Dill, they assisted converts in registering and voting.¹⁶ As a result of his strenuous campaigning and his facility for organization, not to mention his success with women voters, he went into the primary election favored to win the Democratic party's nomination to Congress.¹⁷ There were no surprises. Dill defeated his Democratic challengers and now faced Republican Harry Rosenhaupt and Progressive Thomas Corkery in the general election.¹⁸

Having won the primary, the would-be congressman repeated his successful strategy in hopes of winning the general election. In this contest, however, he would be a decided underdog: Rosenhaupt, the Republican candidate, had the advantage of the region's track record of supporting

¹⁵Ibid., 13 August 1914.

¹⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 46-47.

¹⁷Spokane Chronicle, 3 September 1914.

¹⁸Spokesman-Review, 24 September 1914. Secretary Of State, Abstract of the Votes polled in the State of Washington in the Primary Election September 8, 1914 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

Republicans and a significantly larger party structure. In addition, the ten Republican candidates had polled five thousand more votes in the primary than the four Democratic candidates. In order to win, the Democratic nominee would have to convert a massive number of voters.

Dill did not waste any time, nor did he overlook any opportunity to speak. He appeared at the Inter-State fair on 20 September, spoke at luncheons, and advanced his candidacy at women's clubs and business meetings. He even spoke at public schools when the opportunity presented itself. Towns like Foothill and Kiesling, which might have thought themselves safe from the onslaughts of a congressional campaign, found themselves having to put-up with the orations of one Clarence Dill.¹⁹

The congressional election of 1914 presented clear choices to the voters of Washington's Fifth district. Dill ran first and foremost as a Woodrow Wilson supporter. Harry Rosenhaupt sought to capitalize on the recession which had gripped the country in 1913 and was still lingering in the Inland Empire. He advocated a return to the high Republican tariff of the pre-Wilson period, and the building of a merchant marine which would free American trade from foreign dependency. Interestingly, Rosenhaupt also supported the development of the Columbia River - though he was not specific. Thomas Corkery, the Progressive candidate, championed a non-partisan tariff commission, child labor laws, and low interest loans for farmers.²⁰

In October, Dill made another swing through the rugged northern half of

¹⁹Spokesman-Review, 20 September 1914. *Ibid.*, 24 September 1914. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1914, 11. Spokane Chronicle, 24 September 1914. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1914.

²⁰Spokane Chronicle, 25 September 1914.

the Fifth district.²¹ His speeches on this trip featured an attack on his opponent's tariff position. He argued:

Republicans and Progressives in this campaign are fighting a straw man when they try to make the tariff one of the leading questions of the campaign. The tariff is not, and cannot be made an issue. The European war destroyed the tariff issue so far as this campaign is concerned. Those who defend a high tariff do so on the theory that American manufactures are thereby protected from the competition of foreign manufactured goods. The people of Europe are so busy killing one another and making powder and armaments that they have no time for anything else, and, even if they could make them, they could not ship them across the seas. The best proof of this is found in the fact that the tariff duties no longer produce revenue and we are forced to levy a war tax. If we were still depending on the old high tariff duties, the war tax would necessarily be much higher.²²

Dill seemed to make valid points concerning the tariff; many were persuaded.

As October's days grew shorter, the Democrat, always aggressive, intensified his effort. The Republic Journal noted the fervor of his campaign: "Mr. Dill is making an aggressive fight for the election in every county in the district. He is spending practically all of his time out among the voters in the various counties and is holding meetings nightly."²³

While Dill attacked Rosenhaupt's tariff stance, he fought a rear guard action against Corkery's progressivism. Corkery threatened to capture enough progressive votes to defeat the Democrat and hand victory to the Republicans. Dill deftly responded to the Corkery threat; he emphasized his approval of the heart of Corkery's program: a rural credit law which would provide low interest loans to farmers, and child labor laws.²⁴

²¹Spokesman-Review, 7 October 1914, 7. Ibid.

²²Spokane Chronicle, 6 October 1914.

²³Republic Journal, 8 October 1914.

²⁴Ibid.

The campaign, hectic and exhausting, now nearly ended in tragedy. After finishing a speech in Entiat, Dill apparently lingered too long with voters. Made aware his train was about to leave on its up-river run, the candidate hurried to the station. The train slowly chugged out of Entiat as Clarence attempted to leap aboard. But he missed the train's platform and sprawled underneath the moving cars. Two bystanders jerked him off of the tracks, saving his life. Fearing the worst, the engineers stopped the train, but were relieved to find only a badly shaken would-be congressman and a couple of quick thinking townsmen.²⁵

Although the tariff issue defined the campaign, Dill had not forgotten women. As the election approached, it became clear to many observers that women were supporting Clarence in huge numbers. This phenomenon even attracted the attention of old-time politicians who had been confident that granting the vote to women would not substantially alter political demographics. These political sages were sure that men "did all the voting."²⁶ Nor was this lack of respect for the role of women limited to old-timers; a reporter for the Colville Examiner theorized that women supported Dill in such large numbers because, "He is clean, capable, courteous, and is the possessor of a winning personality."

The reporter had no excuse for his patronizing tone as the article went on to quote a woman on the reasons she supported Dill; "I am improving my spare time working to help elect C. C. Dill. . . because I think he is the proper man for us to send to Congress and help uphold President Wilson's policies. . . not only Democratic women but all women should get out and help elect Dill. . ." ²⁷ Clearly

²⁵Spokesman-Review, 10 October 1914.

²⁶Colville Examiner, 11 October 1914.

²⁷Ibid.

the woman had analyzed Wilson's policies and Dill's campaign, and decided Dill would best represent her interests in Washington, D.C. Of course, Dill's amiable personality did not hurt him.

On 11 October, Dill attracted a large crowd in Colville. Reiterating his support for Wilson, he charged the Republicans with deceiving the people on the tariff issue. Dill knew the tariff was the weak spot in his armor. Many people in the district believed the lower Democratic tariff had adversely affected them. As noted above, the Democratic candidate went to great lengths to demonstrate that the election of a Republican congressman could not possibly affect the country's tariff policy, as Wilson would most assuredly be able to sustain any veto. Moreover, Dill argued once more that the European war made American tariff policy irrelevant.²⁸ Apparently Dill's speeches struck home. The Republic Journal reported on 15 October, "Dill's addresses resulted in many of those present of opposite political faith to vote for him."²⁹ The same paper further advised its readers that sending a Republican to Congress to work with Wilson would be a waste of a congressman.³⁰

While canvassing the district, Dill had not lost sight of the fact that the campaign would be won or lost in Spokane. He had visited his hometown consistently throughout the campaign, and fully intended to devote the last week of the race to the city. His opponents, equally aware of the importance of Spokane, also focused their efforts there as the race came to a close. According to pollsters, Rosenhaupt entered the last stage of the campaign with the lead.³¹ But

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Republic Journal, 15 October 1914.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Spokane Chronicle, 22 October 1914. Spokesman-Review, 25 October

Republicans across the state, confident of victory in other races, focused their attention on the Fifth district. Indeed, the newly created Fifth district captured the attention of the entire state, as it featured a close race among fervid campaigners.³²

In the last days of the campaign Rosenhaupt continued to hammer away at Dill's tariff position. The Spokesman-Review came to his aid with an editorial which exposed holes in Dill's tariff argument. The paper argued that the war had not interrupted trade to the extent Dill claimed, in fact quite the opposite. The European nations were now dumping goods in American ports as many of their European trading partners were unreachable. The paper quoted statistics from New York where dry goods imports for the week ending 3 October 1914 were the highest in eight years. Hence the American tariff, had it still been high, would have been producing significant revenue.³³ A few days later the Spokesman-Review blasted Dill again in a cartoon depicting him as attempting to ride Wilson's coattails into office while ignoring real issues.³⁴

Rosenhaupt and the Spokesman-Review were making points, but Dill was not idle. He defended the Underwood tariff in terms appealing to many, and drove home the point that electing anyone other than a Democrat to office was a waste of the district's congressman. Corkery, the Progressive, argued now that neither political party was fit for office.³⁵

1914.

³²Ibid., 18 October 1914.

³³Ibid., 23 October 1914, 4. Ibid., 25 October 1914.

³⁴Ibid., 26 October 1914.

³⁵Ibid., 25 October 1914.

Dill was not finished. He took advantage of his relationship with Governor Lister and persuaded him to come to Spokane to speak. Lister agreed, speaking several times for the young candidate.³⁶ But Robert Saltvig, a student of the 1914 election, has argued that Lister's help was too little, too late, to have been of much value.³⁷

While the district's newspapers generally gave their support to Rosenhaupt, at least one admitted that it liked C.C. Dill in spite of the fact he belonged to the wrong party, "...if fate and the voters ordain that Mr. Dill is to represent this district in congress we do not know of any Democrat whom we would rather see in the office."³⁸

But Anna McCue could think of several. Apparently unaware of the political realities in the Fifth district, McCue, a suffrage and labor leader representing the Congressional Union, a national women's suffrage organization, was touring the state campaigning against Democratic candidates because the national Democratic organization had not supported national woman's suffrage. It was only days before the election. Dill could not afford to have the support of women knocked out from underneath him. In a bold move, he decided to confront McCue when she spoke at a meeting of the civic and legislative committees of the City Federation of Women's Clubs of Spokane.³⁹ McCue spoke to the women for 25 minutes, "flaying the national democratic organization for spurning suffrage as a

³⁶Ibid., 28 October 1914.

³⁷Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington," 345.

³⁸Oroville Gazette, 16 October 1914.

³⁹Seattle Times, 2 November 1914, 7. Spokane Chronicle, 30 October 1914.

nation-wide institution."⁴⁰ When she had finished, the uninvited Dill rose and asked chairperson Sara Flannigan for five minutes of rebuttal. Clearly astonished at Dill's request, Flannigan put the question to a vote. The ladies agreed to hear the intruder. The progressive Democrat repeated his stance on woman's suffrage; the ladies applauded. Encouraged, he suggested that Miss McCue's time would have been better spent in a state where anti-suffrage Democrats were running for office.⁴¹ While newspapers considered Clarence's behavior to be lacking in chivalry, in order to tell the story they had to mention his response, which was exactly what he wanted.⁴² Dill could not afford to let McCue go unanswered. Moreover, the entire episode demonstrated to thinking voters how important Dill considered women and their support to be.

On the eve of the election Dill relaxed, knowing he had done all humanly possible to secure his election. He predicted that the district's support for Wilson would minimize the number of progressive Democrats willing to vote for Corkery, the Progressive candidate, leaving enough votes to carry him into office. Moreover, he hoped Corkery's candidacy would hurt Rosenhaupt as a significant number of progressive Republicans might be expected to vote for Corkery. He confidently broke down just how the various counties would come in: "I shall come to Spokane county with a lead of 1,500 to 2,000 votes and will carry this county by at least 1,500, which will make my plurality between 3,000 and 4,000 in the district."⁴³

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Seattle Times, 2 November 1914, 7.

⁴³Spokane Chronicle, 2 November 1914.

Dill was a prophet. He carried the district almost exactly as he had predicted polling 24,410 votes to Rosenhaupt's 20,033. Corkery took 15,509 votes, the majority of which had probably been Republican supporters before the Progressive party came to be.⁴⁴ The one county the Democrat thought he might lose, Chelan (Wenatchee), he lost, but by only a few votes. Dill's victory was a stunning upset and a significant achievement.⁴⁵

Republicans were surprised Dill had won because not a single daily newspaper in the district had endorsed him.⁴⁶ In fact, many had done their best to ignore him in the last few weeks of the campaign. The Spokane Press characterized the opposition in colorful language:

We were willing, last September, to admit that Boston had a chance to win from the Athletics, that Pinchot might be defeated by Penrose in Pennsylvania, that Uncle Joe Cannon might go back to Congress, and that the Kaiser might take Paris. Mind you, we were willing to admit all these possibilities a short time ago; in fact, we'd admit anything almost: but we would never have admitted that any man, much less a Democrat, could go out and be elected to Congress without the support of a single daily newspaper in his district. Why, it simply couldn't be done; that's all! But it was done, and right here in our own little Fifth Congressional District.⁴⁷

Political observers were amazed for other reasons as well: Republican strength in the primary was over 5,000 votes greater than the Democratic, northeastern Washington had a long tradition of Republican dominance, and

⁴⁴Secretary of State. Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of Washington in the General Election November 3, 1914 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Spokane Chronicle, 5 November 1914.

⁴⁷Spokane Press, 24 November 1914.

finally, Washington was a Republican state, especially when it came to national office.⁴⁸ The state had not sent a Democrat to the lower house of Congress since 1899.⁴⁹ Contributing to the shock of Republican defeat in the Fifth district, and to the significance of Dill's victory, was the fact that the party was triumphant in all of the other races for national office throughout the state: Wesley Jones was reelected to the Senate, William La Follette - in the Fourth district - was returned to the House, as were Republicans in the other congressional races. Dill alone played sour notes on the Republican bandwagon.⁵⁰

Dill's victory was a significant achievement because it began a transformation, though a very slow one, in Washington state politics. It gave Democrats throughout the state hope - hope which had received precious few infusions since the Democrats had mustered the power to give the state's electoral votes to William Jennings Bryan in 1896, and elected John Rogers governor along with a sympathetic legislature - that they might one day control the state's delegation to the national capital.⁵¹ That day was still distant, but there can be no doubt that the renewal of the Democratic party - in terms of hope for national office - began with the election of Clarence Dill in 1914.

There were other significant ramifications to Dill's victory. It raised the possibility, a possibility many in the party shuttered to think of, that the future of the Democratic party in Washington state lay in identifying itself with workers and

⁴⁸Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the Primary Election in the State of Washington September 8, 1914 (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Spokesman-Review, 5 November 1914, 1. Ibid., 12 November 1914.

⁴⁹Spokesman-Review, 5 November 1914, 1.

⁵⁰Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes.

⁵¹Robert E. Ficken, The Forested Land (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 85.

farmers. Dill had polled majorities in all of his district's rural counties except one, and had won in the city of Spokane despite the opposition of that city's newspapers, most of which were staunchly conservative in editorial policy. More importantly, Dill's overt effort to gain the women's vote, and to include them in his campaign, marked a distinct change from the past. Barring a catastrophic political mistake by Clarence Dill, anyone who hoped to unseat him would have to take women seriously as a political force. There is no way to demonstrate that the women's vote turned the election to Dill in 1914, but it is instructive to remember that the candidate took his biggest gamble of the campaign for fear that he might lose that vote when he challenged Anna McCue before the City Federation of Women's Clubs.

Nor can the role of the Progressive candidate, Thomas Corkery, be ignored. Had he not run, a significant number of his supporters would have returned to the Republican party in spite of the fact that Dill was closer to Corkery politically than Rosenhaupt. In the second decade of the twentieth century American political parties were in a state of flux, were searching for an identity, ideology was but one factor among many which determined the allegiance of voters.⁵²

In celebration of Dill's victory the Women's Democratic Club put on a dinner which the new congressman attended. A letter from May Arkwright Hutton was read (Hutton had predicted in 1912 that Dill would be the next congressman from the Spokane area) and Dill spoke briefly, thanking the women "...for the aid they had give him in the campaign and assuring them that he would be loyal in

⁵²John Cooper, Pivotal Decades (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 147, 178-179. David Burner, Politics of Provincialism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 28-39.

representing their interests in Washington."⁵³

⁵³Spokesman - Review 15 November 1914.

MR. DILL GOES TO WASHINGTON

While the Europeans were reigning death and destruction over most of their continent, Clarence Dill began to live his dream as a congressman from Washington. Strange as it may seem now, the young man's services were not required in the nation's capital until December of 1915 when the new Congress would be seated. When it finally came time to head to Washington, D.C., Dill stopped in Ohio to pick up his parents and Professor Fulton, who wanted to attend the inauguration. The solemnity of the occasion impressed everyone in Dill's party, but they were surprised at the brevity of the ceremony.¹

On January 31, 1916 the young congressman rose from his seat and made his first speech in the House.² Back in Ohio, Fanny Ball, an old woman now, received the news with a great deal of pride. But Dill had completely forgotten that he owed her money. She wrote him a letter reminding him of the debt which he promptly paid in full - .70 cents including interest.³

Dill's first term as a United States congressman was largely devoted to two problems: opening the Colville Indian Reservation to white settlement and securing more mail routes for his rural constituents. Fortunately for the young politician, he soon found a powerful friend in Congress.

Not long after the congressional session opened, Champ Clark, the Speaker of the House, called the freshmen congressmen together in order to explain to them the rules of the game.⁴ Clark's advice made a lasting impression upon Dill.

¹Spokesman-Review, 29 November 1914. Dill, Where Water Falls, 50.

²Congressional Record (31 January 1916) Vol. 53, Pt. 2, 1922-25.

³Note and receipt, CDP, EWSHS, Spokane.

⁴It is interesting to note that the current Speaker of the House, Thomas

He recorded the instructions of the revered speaker:

Starting as a member of Congress is like the spelling bee, you must spell-up from the foot of the class. The secret of success here is hard work, loyalty to your party, and more hard work. Remember that every request from a constituent is important - big to him and therefore important to you, no matter how small it may seem. Your biggest job is to get reelected.

If you get licked, don't let that end your career if you want to become a statesman. I got licked. Uncle Joe got licked (Joe Cannon) - licked twice. La Follette got licked. Bryan got licked. The question to decide is, will you stay licked.⁵

There was not a word in Clark's admonition that Dill ever forgot.

Clarence had gone quietly about his business for several weeks when he happened by Clark on his way to the House Office Building. Clark hailed the young man and asked him, "Why don't you ever come to see me?" Dill answered, "I haven't had any particular business to discuss with you, and knowing how busy you are, I didn't think I should bother you." The Speaker told Dill, "Come in and see me, I want to talk to you." Dill presented himself at the speaker's office at ten o'clock the next day. The first thing he wanted to know was whether or not Dill planned to run again. Clarence responded that he did, but considered his chances for reelection slim since the Bull Moose party had reconciled with the Republican party.⁶ Clark informed Dill that he was interested in helping the young man in

Foley, hails from Clarence Dill's old congressional district.

⁵Dill, Where Water Falls, 50-51.

⁶Dill was under the impression that Corkery's candidacy had taken more votes from Rosenhaupt than from himself. His opinion may well have some merit given the rather chaotic state of the political parties at this time. Most of the Bull Moose party's strength was derived from the Republican party. Thus with the dissolution of the Bull Moose party many of its supporters would return to the fold as Corkery did. Nevertheless there was some reason to hope that a significant number of Bull Moose backers would find supporting Dill less ideologically strenuous than returning to a Republican party which was apparently being shunted

whatever way he could. The speaker went on to explain to Dill that he was the only Democratic congressman from the Pacific Northwest; Clark did not want to lose him. Indeed, Clark hoped to build the Democratic party in that region based on Dill's accomplishments in conjunction with those of the Wilson administration. Clark then asked Dill what could be done to help insure his reelection. Clarence explained to his would-be benefactor the importance of opening the Colville Indian Reservation, situated in the heart of the Fifth district, to white settlement.⁷

Conflict between Native Americans, the Indian Bureau, and white men over the Colville Indian Reservation in north central and eastern Washington had been going on for decades for good reason. The Colville reservation represented one of the last remnants of the American frontier. Thousands of people in Washington hoped to settle on the virtually untouched land. Even those who had no interest in settling the land, men like Dill, possessed a romantic view concerning the inhabiting of new land. The builders of the West considered themselves the rightful heirs of their predecessor's pioneer blood. The Colville frontier consisted of over one million acres of land, rich in timber, minerals, farm land, grazing land, and water resources. The Wenatchee Daily World described the reservation as follows:

The agricultural lands are best adapted to stock raising, fruits, and grains. The forest will yield hundreds of millions of feet of lumber. Although sufficient investigation had been conducted to reveal the presence of gold, silver, copper, nickel, and lead, lack of transportation facilities has prevented mining on a large scale. However, the Great Northern railway's new branch will open up the district this fall.⁸

into conservatism by its opposition to Wilson's progressive policies.

⁷Dill, Where Water Falls, 52.

⁸Wenatchee Daily World, 16 June 1913, 5.

Experts predicted the agricultural lands on the reservation would yield up to two thousand dollars worth of produce per acre. Whites looked upon the Native American's domain with great anticipation since the usable land on all four sides of the reservation was relatively well settled.⁹

Washington's only Democratic congressman's primary objective in his first term was to see to the opening of the Colville Indian Reservation.¹⁰ That he did not see this endeavor as a contradiction of his progressivism should not surprise us. For progressives did not necessarily espouse the equality of all Americans as one of their ideals. In the South one of the reasons progressivism was popular was because it clearly did not include blacks.¹¹ Moreover, progressives often featured a paternalistic attitude as Richard Hofstadter showed in Age Of Reform.¹² Then too, many whites who were truly concerned about Native Americans believed integration with white society, as opposed to segregation, was best for them. As we shall soon see, Dill was one of these. Thus his effort to open the reservation need not have occasioned a crisis of conscience. Of course success in opening the reservation would immensely help his reelection prospects.

At first glance Dill's mission would not seem overly difficult. The conditions which had led to the controversy began in 1872 when President Grant's administration created the Colville Indian Reservation and settled nearly four

⁹Ibid., 30 December 1914, 3.

¹⁰Spokesman-Review, 12 November 1914.

¹¹Arthur Link and Richard McCormick, Progressivism (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983), 33.

¹²Richard Hofstadter, The Age Of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 9, 210.

thousand Native Americans of various tribes on it. Several years later Chief Joseph's Nez Perce tribe - what was left of it - was put on the reservation as well. In 1891 a federal commission was empowered to purchase the northern half of the reservation, about 1.5 million acres, for eventual sale to settlers and businesses. This left what became known as the southern half of the reservation to the Native Americans, which the United States government decided to open to white settlement in 1906. It should be noted the latter decision was not taken without the approval of the Native Americans of the Colville reservation. On 1 December 1905, 350 of the estimated 551 adult Native Americans signed the McLaughlin Agreement thus agreeing to give up claim to the reservation - accepting individual allotments of eighty acres per man, woman, and child and 1.5 million dollars for their reservation rights. Many of the Colville's were also motivated by the desire to wriggle free from the paternalistic control of the federal government. But this did not occur within the lifetime of most of the signers of the McLaughlin Agreement. Any unclaimed land was to eventually revert to Indian ownership.¹³

The Opening Act of 1906 provided that the secretary of the interior dispose of the un-allotted lands (lands not taken by individual Native Americans) through the sale of those lands to buyers chosen by lot. So the matter rested from 1906 until 1914. By 1914 it had become obvious the Indian Bureau had no intention of facilitating the opening of the reservation. Secretaries of the interior had come and gone and the matter had slipped between the cracks. The Indian

¹³Omak Chronicle, 6 May 1965. Ibid., 11 March 1971. Spokesman-Review, 20 February 1955, 8. The agreement was named after James McLaughlin, a United States Indian Inspector at the time. The Colville Indians received directly only a fraction of the 1.5 million dollars promised to them, the rest was apparently used by the Indian Bureau.

Bureau preferred the status quo, for if termination of Indian reservations became national policy, termination of the Indian Bureau would soon follow.

The Indian Bureau was not about to cooperate in its own demise. It dragged its heels on the allotment process, and used any other means of delay it could devise. Even after it was obvious Congress was taking a renewed interest in opening the Colville Reservation, and that the Washington delegation had some political clout, and after an agreement opening the reservation in the summer of 1916 had been reached, Commissioner Cato Sells of the Indian Bureau continued to obstruct the opening of the reservation.¹⁴

Dill, and the other members of Washington's congressional delegation, now attempted to push the Indian Bureau toward opening the Colville land.¹⁵ As a result of his visit with Clark, Clarence was instructed to call on House Majority Leader Claude Kitchen and tell him to bring-up the Washingtonian's resolution concerning the Indian Bureau. That resolution would have opened an investigation of the bureau.

Next Dill went to see Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane. The secretary claimed he knew nothing about the delay in opening the Colville Reservation. Lane decided to call Clark to see what was going on. Dill listened to the conversation as he sat in Lane's office. There can be no doubt Dill's relation of that conversation is embellished. According to Dill, Clark dressed Lane down in no uncertain terms, telling the Secretary if you do not ". . . do something about this reservation, we will pass it [the resolution investigating the Indian Department]

¹⁴Wenatchee Daily World, 18 December 1915, 1.

¹⁵Ibid. Dill, Where Water Falls, 53.

and investigate [the] Indian Department."¹⁶ Lane now promised to call Sells and get the Indian Bureau moving. In a conversation with Dill, Sells promised to be ready to conduct the drawings for settlers by 1 July 1916, and to open at least six more townships to settlement.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Dill and the other members of the Washington delegation were not idle. The resolution calling for the investigation of the Indian Bureau was discussed on the floor of the House.¹⁸ And Dill made a speech in which he called for the opening of reservations as a means of strengthening Native American society, and catalogued a number of Indian Bureau abuses. He argued the greatest danger Native Americans faced was the probability of becoming permanent wards of the state. In fact, Dill said, such a result seemed to be the inescapable fate of Native Americans on reservations. Ultimately he envisioned complete integration of Native Americans with white society as the best solution, what he would have called a progressive solution, to this dependency.

Dill then presented numerous instances of Indian Bureau malfeasance, ineptitude, and corruption. He explained how the Indian Bureau arrogated unto itself over a period of years the power to spend Native American funds without congressional approval. In his speech, Dill hammered the Indian Department:

Of course they spend this money (tribal money), as they say, for the benefit of the Indian, but the trouble is they, the officials, are the judges of when, where, and how the Indians shall be benefited and how much of his

¹⁶Ibid. As Speaker of the House, Clark seldom recorded a vote on issues so it is difficult to compare the two men's voting records in order to determine how much gratitude Dill felt toward the man who had helped him so much. However, Dill was generally a loyal Democrat except for preparedness issues.

¹⁷Ibid., 54. Spokesman - Review, 9 April 1916, 9.

¹⁸Congressional Record (8 February) Vol. 53, Pt. 3.

money shall be spent. The practical result has been that the expenditures for salaries and employees in the department have increased by leaps and bounds, and it seems they increased fastest on those Indian reservations where the Indians have tribal funds which can be so used. The general increase in expenditure, for salaries, and employees in the Indian Department in the last five years has been one hundred and fifty percent, while on some of the reservations the increase has been two hundred fifty percent to three hundred percent.¹⁹

Dill further delineated how the Indian Bureau had acted in bad faith specifically in reference to the Colville Reservation. The Opening Act of 1906 instructed the Bureau to open the reservation, but the Indian Bureau proceeded to ignore the act, and when disregarding the act was not possible, to delay acquiescence. The Bureau engaged in such behavior as building a new Indian agency on the reservation in 1914 in the middle of land most likely to go to white settlers. The new agency featured homes for Indian Bureau employees, a magnificent water system, and tennis courts, all paid for by Indian money for the "benefit of the Indians."²⁰

Dill's castigating of the Indian Bureau, his behind the scenes maneuvering, and the efforts of the other members of Washington's delegation - especially Senator Miles Poindexter - led to the Indian Bureau now moving quickly to follow the dictates of a Congress ten years past.²¹ Moreover, on 3 May 1916, President

¹⁹Speech of Clarence Dill to the House in Committee of the Whole House, CDP.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Wenatchee Daily World, 9 December 1915, 1. Ibid., 3 May 1916, 1. Howard Allen, Poindexter of Washington (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 162. In his biography of Poindexter Allen comments only briefly on the Colville episode. He makes the point that Poindexter, in his campaign for reelection to the senate in 1916, argued that he, not Dill, had pushed through Congress the opening of the Colville reservation.

Wilson signed additional legislation which facilitated the opening of the Colville Reservation. When he finished, he turned to Dill and handed him the pen; Clarence cabled a telegram home: "I saw the President sign the Colville proclamation at 10:25 today."²²

While Dill's blasting of the Indian Bureau's self interest was well placed, the congressman and his constituents were not without self-interest of their own as a letter from Dill to Arthur Gunn indicates. In the letter Clarence is anxious to help anyone interested in vying for a portion of the Colville reservation. Dill's letter does not imply any dishonesty, but it does serve as a reminder of white civilization's hope to profit from Native American lands.²³

Regardless of whom might profit or lose, the opening of the reservation went forward. Those interested in securing reservation lands registered for the drawing in one of six eastern Washington cities.²⁴ After the registration period ended, the drawing was held in Spokane beginning 27 July 1916. Dill named ten year old Margaret Cunningham as one of the drawers of the envelopes. Officials estimated fifteen hundred homesteads would go to those whose names were drawn.²⁵ Dill had succeeded in his first term's primary goal.

Unfortunately, he had also engaged in opprobrious activity in regard to the Colville reservation which would eventually cause him anxious moments much later in his career. But for now, the congressman from the Fifth district was quite

²²Ibid., 3 May 1916, 1.

²³Dill to Arthur Gunn, 16 May 1916, Arthur Gunn Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

²⁴Wenatchee Daily World, 3 May 1916, 1.

²⁵Okanogan Independent, 18 July 1916, 1. Ibid., 1 August 1916, 1.

popular among his constituents. Moreover, the opening of the Colville reservation was only one of his accomplishments.

Dill also was able to deliver on a promise he had made to his rural constituents. As he visited the small towns and large farms in his district during the campaign, he had promised to establish new rural mail routes. In his effort to deliver on this promise he secured the help of Jack Garner, a congressman from Texas. Garner told Dill the most effective procedure for obtaining the mail routes. His instructions were to take only one request at a time to the clerks in the Postmaster General's Office; treat the clerks with extreme courtesy and explain how important that new mail route was. Garner added, "Follow it up so it doesn't get pigeonholed somewhere." Finally, Dill was to be sure the request got to Dan Roper, the Assistant Postmaster General, and a good South Carolina Democrat. Then he was to visit Roper personally to explain the necessity of the request. As Dill later wrote, "We secured more rural mail routes that first year than any district had ever won. . ."²⁶

Dill's accomplishments in behalf of the people of Washington in his first term were impressive and were largely based on his ability to make friends with powerful men like Champ Clark. In this endeavor his friendly manner and charm no doubt helped. But such qualities are no small part of a successful politician's repertoire. The young Democrat also benefited from the fact that his party controlled both houses of Congress. Nor was Dill unmindful of the fact that the Speaker's help had a price tag; he was expected to "spell up" as Clark put it. Back in the Fifth district Dill could now run for reelection claiming he knew how to get

²⁶Spokesman - Review, 7 November 1967. Dill, Where Water Falls, 54-55.

things done in Washington D.C., that he had been an effective "bird dog" for his constituents. In the election of 1916 Dill would argue that his efforts were helping to build the West, making life better there. It was an impressive argument, for Westerners occasionally felt that somehow they weren't quite treated with the same respect back east as other Americans.²⁷ But Clarence Dill seemed to be doing just fine in the nation's capital.

²⁷Ibid., 14 June 1933, 4.

REELECTION, REFLECTION, AND WRATH

In the fall of 1916 Clarence Dill, along with President of the United States Woodrow Wilson, stood for reelection. At this time the two men agreed on the role the country ought to pursue in regard to the war: neutrality, though Dill did not support the President's preparedness program. Ultimately neither man was able to avoid the vicissitudes and tribulations the war engendered. Indeed, Wilson's role in the "war to end all wars" would eventually overshadow his domestic accomplishments, significant as they were; while Dill found the war profoundly vexing though his concerns did not have the global significance of the President's. For the decisions concerning the war the young congressman would make over the next two years would separate him from Woodrow Wilson and ultimately lead to his defeat when he ran for reelection in 1918. In addition, Dill's war related votes and speeches forever imprinted upon the minds of some influential Washingtonians that he was a dangerous radical.

The European war had bogged down in the mud of eastern France because defensive tactics had advanced more rapidly than offensive capabilities. The Europeans had disdained study of the American Civil War and thus had not learned the lesson Longstreet taught the Union so thoroughly at Fredericksburg, and warned Lee to heed, without affect, at Gettysburg: frontal assaults on entrenched positions were suicidal and sheer madness. As the war continued Americans increasingly sought to prepare for eventual belligerency, or find a way to stay out. Clarence Dill's heart was with the latter, though he was willing to compromise with those of the former opinion given certain conditions.

No sooner had the war begun than Dill announced his antipathy to it - a not uncommon American response in the Summer of 1914. Teddy Roosevelt himself began the war agreeing with C.C. Dill. Gradually, many Americans came to favor

entering the war, but Dill remained opposed.¹ He was a member of what historian Arthur Link called the "progressive-pacifistic movement."² Link argues that these people saw America in the role of saviour to a decadent Europe. But America could only fulfill that role if it were itself pure, "triumphant over social and economic injustice."³ Thus to these progressive-pacifists, war, by its very nature, would destroy the chance the United States had to play messiah. Inevitably the issue of preparing for the possibility of war arose and when it did the congressman favored what he considered common sense precautions. His thinking, however, bore the unmistakable imprint of radicalism.

Dill advocated preparedness primarily from the standpoint of justifying government intervention in the private sector, so as to remove profit from war manufacturing.⁴ He believed that if the government simply purchased weapons from the private sector war material manufacturers would make enormous profits as many of them had during the Civil War. Like John Dewey, he believed the war provided the opportunity for the federal government to regulate, and in some cases even operate, key war industries. The presupposition was that government involvement in the private sector in this fashion would result in greater efficiency and savings to American taxpayers during the war. In May 1916 he urged his congressional colleagues to follow his thinking:

¹Letter of 26 April 1916 from C.C. Dill to Arthur Gunn, Arthur Gunn Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

²Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York: Harper Bros., 1954), 180.

³Ibid.

⁴Congressional Record (31 May 1916), vol. 53, pt. 9, 8969.

If I had my way the government would, as soon as facilities could be provided, build every ship for its Navy and make all its own munitions. I am in favor of the government manufacture of all the necessary equipment for national defense, first because it will remove the sinister influence of the war trust in the determination of our policy of national defense; and, second, it will enable us to secure a dollar's worth of preparedness for a dollar, instead of 60 or 70 cents worth of preparedness for a dollar.⁵

Profoundly disturbed by the war, Dill went to the trouble of canvassing his entire district on various war related issues in the spring of 1916. He asked his constituents if they favored doubling appropriations for the Army and Navy. By a 3 to 2 margin the residents of Spokane favored the increase, while the rural people of his district barely approved. Over twelve thousand votes were tallied in Dill's poll, so the results were fairly representative of the public mind. Asked if they favored Wilson's war policy, Spokane residents approved 4 to 1. The rural voters approved only 2 to 1; other questions in the survey would cause one to believe that those who opposed Wilson's policy thought it too provocative, rather than too timid. Dill even asked his district if they would support a Jeffersonian style embargo - refusal to ship munitions and foodstuffs in an effort to remain neutral. Spokane rejected such an idea 2 to 1, the rural portion of the district rejected the proposal, but by the narrower margin of roughly 7 to 5. Finally, Dill asked voters if they favored compulsory military service. The urbanites of Spokane were evenly split, while citizens in rural areas rejected such a policy at a 6 to 4 ratio (about a 2,000 vote difference).⁶

Dill's survey, while not scientific, evoked such a significant response that it deserves to be taken seriously. He certainly believed that he had accurately taken

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

the pulse of his people.⁷ The survey, then, provides a wonderful view of American public opinion in the West in the spring of 1916. It is even more valuable because Dill's staff broke the poll down into counties, then into rural and urban figures. While historians have long been aware that rural America in general, especially the Midwest and West, had greater isolationist feelings than more populous regions in the East, Dill's survey demonstrates that isolationist sentiment, even in the West, was centered in rural areas. Dill, of course, followed his life long hero William Jennings Bryan in his opinions concerning the war, and was thus sympathetic to the rural element.⁸

As the war rumbled into 1916, the issue of preparedness marched to the fore. The Wilson administration, buckling to pressure from the right and its bespectacled leader Teddy Roosevelt, pushed for preparedness measures which gave Clarence Dill pause.⁹ In February 1916 Wilson prudently advocated increased expenditures on the Army and Navy. But in the middle of the month Dill and over fifty other Democratic congressmen, combined with Republicans, succeeded in torpedoing Wilson's preparedness plan for the Army which led to the resignation of Secretary of War Garrison. The secretary had enthusiastically advocated the creation of a "Continental Army" which would have been a wholly federal force. He opposed federalizing the National Guard for fear doing so would not be constitutional and because he hoped the guard would provide a ready reserve force.¹⁰ While the Republicans generally favored more preparedness

⁷Ibid.

⁸Spokesman - Review, 24 October 1916, 4.

⁹Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 185. Nathan Miller, Theodore Roosevelt (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992), 550.

¹⁰Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 183-186.

measures than even Wilson wanted, they were not prepared to support the President's plan primarily because it was part of a very partisan revenue bill.¹¹ Democrats who opposed the secretary did so because they "feared a large effective army under the control of the War Department."¹² Back home the Spokesman-Review was livid over Dill's "befogged" position on preparedness. The newspaper pointed out that Dill had campaigned in 1914 as a supporter of the President, but was now one of the primary thorns in Wilson's side. It went on to criticize Dill for his arrogance concerning the development of the army: "Mr. Dill...has a program that is altogether his own, with no resemblance to the program proposed by the general staff, or the original of the President and his secretary of war, and differing from the plans that are being formulated by the military committees of the Senate and the House. He is his own military expert..."¹³ Although there appeared to be no shortage of plans to expand the military shuffling around Washington, the Spokesman Review exaggerated when it called Dill's plan "his own." For Dill was but one of a number of congressman, largely from the West and South, men dependent upon farmers and labor for support, who were against the administration's plans for creating the so called "Continental Army." Dill agreed with Majority Leader Claude Kitchen and Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee James Hay of Virginia who proposed to simply increase the number of soldiers in the National Guard.¹⁴ Dill argued this plan would provide several advantages: first, the recruits would not be sent long distances from home at great

¹¹Spokesman - Review, 11 February 1916, 7. Dawley, Struggles For Justice, 175-177.

¹²Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 184.

¹³Spokesman-Review, 15 November 1916, 4.

¹⁴Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 183.

expense; second, the National Guard so increased would retain its defensive nature; and third, the nation would be spared the specter of a huge force the disposal of which - according to Dill - was at the whim of one man.¹⁵ It was this plan, advanced by powerful men such as Kitchen and Hay, which eventually became the nation's strategy for expanding its Army in 1916. Garrison resigned when Wilson gave up the fight and compromised.¹⁶ Clearly, Clarence Dill, the "Woodrow Wilson man," was quite willing to separate from the President on the issue of preparedness.¹⁷

In June 1916 Congress compromised on expansion of the Army. The pro-preparedness Senate was forced to give up its version of ex-secretary Garrison's Continental Army, while the anti-preparedness House accepted federalization of the National Guard and an increase in troops.¹⁸ Dill's yes vote that June might at first glance suggest he had abandoned his anti-preparedness position.¹⁹ But the truth is otherwise. The anti-preparedness forces considered the passage of the National Defense Act in the summer of 1916 a victory. They believed the country had avoided the ruin that "preparedness hysteria" had threatened to wreak, "preserved the traditional American defensive structure," while providing "reasonable preparedness."²⁰ Preparedness advocates agreed that the legislation

¹⁵Spokesman-Review, 13 February 1916, 2.

¹⁶Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 186.

¹⁷Dill presided over the House for a short time on 12 February 1916, the speaker - Champ Clark - so honoring his young protégé.

¹⁸Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 188.

¹⁹Congressional Record (23 March 1916), vol., 53, pt., 5, 4731. Dill voted with the majority 403 - 2.

²⁰Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 189.

was a victory for their opponents. They decried the measure as "one of the most iniquitous bits of legislation ever placed on the statute books."²¹

The anti-preparedness forces, more fearful that a vast army would do more harm to American institutions and liberties than would a huge Navy, had concentrated their resources on molding the Army bill to their liking. Thus the fight over the Navy was less intense. President Wilson ultimately got the large increase in the Navy he desired; though progressives did triumph in their desire for a government run armor-plate factory which they hoped would keep private armor-plate producers from gouging the people on prices.²² As we have seen, Dill supported such a factory. Consequently he voted to approve the Navy bill.²³

Just as controversial as the preparedness measures was the method of paying for all the arms congress had approved. A group of Democrats, Dill among them, threatened to desert Wilson on preparedness issues unless measures requiring "the burden of expenses for whatever increases are made in the Army and Navy will be borne by those who receive large incomes, rather than by those who toil from dawn to dark to provide sufficient clothes for themselves and their families." Specifically, the Democratic opposition to Wilson's increased military expenditures insisted upon raising the income tax on the wealthy.²⁴

In 1916 the tax structure of the United States clearly favored the rich. Most of the nation's revenue came from the tariff and consumer taxes on alcohol

²¹Ibid., 188.

²²Ibid., 189.

²³Congressional Record (15 August 1916), vol., 53, pt., 13, 12700.

²⁴Spokesman - Review 11 February 1916, 7.

and tobacco.²⁵ Conservatives along with the Wilson administration wanted to pay for the preparedness program by selling bonds and raising consumer taxes. Progressives, including Dill, fought this with great energy. They argued for taxes on income, inheritances, and munition's profits.²⁶ The same group of radical Southern and Western Democrats who had helped defeat the Continental Army now formed the core of opposition to the administration's tax plan.²⁷ By July 1916 it was clear control of the Ways and Means Committee had fallen to the radicals. In such circumstances the administration compromised. The Revenue Bill of 1916 was a clear victory for progressives, taxing high incomes, estates and the gross receipts of munitions manufacturers.²⁸ Clarence Dill voted for the measure.²⁹ Unfortunately for Dill, his differences with Wilson over the European war provided opportunities for political opponents to land some telling blows when the election came in the fall of 1916.

In his effort to be returned to Congress that autumn, Dill realized he had to appeal to even more Republican voters than he had in 1914, since he now faced a re-united Republican party with a significantly larger registered electorate. Consequently he decided to de-emphasize his association with the state Democratic party even more than he had in his first run for Congress. Dill reasoned that Democrats were likely to vote for him regardless of his method, but his reelection depended on appealing to a large number of Republicans. Hence he

²⁵Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 192.

²⁶Spokesman - Review, 11 February 1916, 7. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 194.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 195.

²⁹Congressional Record (10 July 1916), vol., 53, pt., 11, 10768.

decided to appear as non-partisan as reasonably possible.

The first manifestation of Dill's reinforced strategy occurred at the state Democratic convention in early May of 1916. He simply didn't attend. He wrote an apologetic letter from Washington D.C. explaining he was unable to attend due to his congressional duties. At the convention, state Democrats proceeded to move in a conservative direction re-enforcing Dill's decision to separate himself from the party. Governor Lister felt the same course of action politic, and followed Dill's example.³⁰ Nor were the feelings one-sided, a Dill supporter who attended the convention wrote to the congressman explaining that various people on the rules committee did not have his best interests at heart.³¹ Thus did Washington's Democratic party alienate its only two successful major candidates from 1914.

Dill did not expect to launch an early campaign, he felt very comfortable about his position in the primary, and he expected congressional business to keep him in the capital through July.³² Dill's confidence was in fact well placed, he ran unopposed in the Democratic primary, and faced Republican Thomas Corkery - his Progressive opponent from 1914 - in the general election.³³ Playing the part of the prodigal son, Corkery had returned to the patriarchal GOP upon the demise of the Bull Moose party.³⁴

³⁰Seattle Daily Times, 2 May 1916, 1. Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington", 385-386.

³¹C.C. Dill to Robert Bridges, Seattle Port Commission Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

³²Ibid.

³³Omak Chronicle, 22 September 1916, 1.

³⁴Okanogan Independent, 17 October 1916, 1.

Dill campaigned on President Wilson's accomplishments, and, of course, his own, especially his work in opening the Colville reservation and securing rural mail routes. Speaking in Harrington, Washington's opera house Dill said of Wilson: "I have supported him consistently...and I expect to continue to do so."³⁵ Dill went on to explain to his Harrington listeners that he believed, should the country one day face war, the proposition should be put to a vote of the people. Those voting in favor, Dill argued, should be the first drafted. He added, "I will never vote for war until I am willing to go myself." Dill finished his speech with his customary humor, "I never paid an income tax until I went to Congress and I like it so well that I would like to continue to pay it."³⁶

Thomas Corkery had a score to settle with Clarence Dill. In that effort he had the advantage of beginning his campaign much earlier than his opponent. The Republican took to the road reminding farmers how he had long supported low interest loans for agriculturalists, and how he had advocated stronger child labor laws. The challenger also sought to arouse concern over the relatively low Underwood tariff rates. He argued that the European war was liable to end suddenly, and when it did the U.S. would be caught with its tariffs down - so to speak - while the Europeans scrambled to reestablish old markets and dump products in the U.S.³⁷

In the fall, Dill toured his district but with less fury than he had shown in 1914. The election was essentially a contest between two progressives; Corkery attacked the farm legislation Dill had voted for and the Wilson administration had

³⁵Spokesman- Review, 16 October 1916, 11.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 16 October 1916, 6.

passed as insufficient. Specifically, Corkery now advocated credit to tenant farmers so as to enable them to purchase land. The Republican also forcefully advocated national prohibition "with both feet" as he put it.³⁸ But neither position distanced him from Dill, nor did they provide him a fulcrum from which to move the Democrat from his pro- Woodrow Wilson, anti-war stance. The President's preference for local option as opposed to national prohibition (Dill's position, which put him in direct alignment with the majority of the Democratic party in Washington state), and Dill's support for national woman's suffrage in spite of Wilson's preference for state option, were two issues which Corkery conceivably might have exploited, but they never became more than minor issues.³⁹ Corkery allowed Dill to campaign as a "Woodrow Wilson Man," while the congressman continued to advocate two major policy differences with the President. Thus Dill had the best of two worlds: positions on two important issues which were popular, and identification with a popular President.⁴⁰ In such circumstances, a Corkery victory was unlikely.

In the last three weeks of the campaign Dill intensified his reelection efforts, revisiting all the little towns and remote crossroads he had come to know

³⁸Okanogan Independent 17 October 1916, 1.

³⁹Norman Clark, The Dry Years (Seattle: University of Washington, 1965), 86, 134. Meeting in Spokane in 1908, the Democrats had resoundingly favored statewide prohibition by constitutional amendment rather than local option. In 1916 Democratic Governor Ernest Lister had been reelected on a dry platform.

⁴⁰Since Wilson's policies concerning prohibition and woman's suffrage were not favored by the majority in the Fifth district, one naturally wonders at the source of his popularity. It derived from a combination of faith in his purpose and ability to keep the US out of war, and the progressive legislation which his administration had secured.

so well in 1914. The political sages and part-time bookies down at the cigar stores put odds on the election which indicated a Wilson, Poindexter (one of Washington's Republican senators), and Dill result.

Eastern Washington newspapers were not thrilled with the prospect of the latter's victory. The Okanogan Independent took a shot at Dill for wearing out the "I" on his typewriter. Dill was a great letter writer, or at least required his clerks to be. He was in the habit of writing letters upon the slightest provocation to whoever might conceivably be interested. Those letters generally contained some reference to the congressman's accomplishments hence the Independent's criticism. Such a practice was no doubt good politics, but when the opposition got hold of Dill's letters, criticism was inevitable.⁴¹

Newspapers did not stop at slamming Dill, they made a patron saint out of Thomas Corkery. The Spokane Press, a labor paper, canonized the Republican candidate in late October; The Okanogan Independent, a conservative small town paper, ran the Press's editorial on 31 October. The editorial described Dill as a man inspired by personal ambition (no doubt true) willing to make impossible promises in order to get elected (absolutely not true, as we shall see). The Press went on to soft-pedal Corkery's pro-preparedness position in regard for the paper's working class readership.⁴² The Spokesman - Review hammered Dill for

⁴¹Okanogan Independent 28 October 1916, 2. Dill wrote his autobiography in much the same style making it less reliable than it might otherwise have been. Fortunately, the record of Dill's accomplishments can be found in other sources. In Dill's defense it should be noted that he rarely got a break from the Eastern Washington newspapers. If news of his efforts were to get to his constituents, he was about the only one to get it there. Thus was his tendency for self promotion exacerbated by circumstances.

⁴²Okanogan Independent 31 October 1916, 1.

obstructing the President on the same issue.⁴³

Dill was not without resources of his own. He returned to his successful 1914 strategy of seeking both the votes and support of women. In one of the more original practices of the day, he had his office send government pamphlets on baby care to the new mothers in his district. Women loved his thoughtfulness. He said at the time, "a great many mothers wrote to tell me of their appreciation of these booklets...mothers in country localities seemed to find the treatises especially valuable."⁴⁴

Dill did not miss opportunities to speak to women. On one mid-October day he spoke to the ladies of the Woodrow Wilson League then delivered a speech at the Grand Army of the Republic Lady's Dance.⁴⁵ Corkery well knew Dill's strength with women and attempted to attract as many of their votes as possible. Late in the campaign, the Republican, apparently feeling the election slip away, decided to make an emotional albeit illogical appeal. He reminded voters of his support for a bill in the state legislature which provided for state aid to mothers who had been left destitute through the death or desertion of their husbands. The Spokesman-Review reported the speech was effective, women were seen with tear-filled eyes, and the paper predicted Corkery had found an issue which would change votes.⁴⁶

With only days left before the election, there was little Dill could do to respond to Corkery, especially since the newspapers were less than friendly to the

⁴³Spokesman - Review, 24 October 1916, 4.

⁴⁴Ibid., October 1916.

⁴⁵Ibid., 17 October 1916, 5.

⁴⁶Ibid., 2 November 1916, 6.

Democrat. He was essentially reduced to hoping the voters were sophisticated enough to recognize Corkery's tactic for what it was: irrelevant and desperate demagoguery.

Dill continued to campaign as a "Woodrow Wilson Man," and repeated his promise to oppose American entry into the European war should it come to a vote. The results of the campaign were predictable; the Republicans swept the state's major offices just as in 1914, with two lone exceptions: Lister and Dill. The two Democrats who had distanced themselves from the conservative mood in the party, had been the only Democratic winners.⁴⁷ Indeed, the one thing most of the victorious major candidates had in common, according to a historian of the progressive movement in Washington, was their progressive politics regardless of party affiliation.⁴⁸

A further examination of the voting patterns in Dill's Fifth district reveals his strength in the rural areas. Dill clobbered Corkery in Douglas and Ferry counties, beat him decisively in Lincoln, Okanogan, and Pend O'Reille counties (the latter had been very close in 1914), and won in a close vote in Spokane county. It would seem that his work on rural mail routes, the opening of the Colville reservation, and concern for rural women, had provided a core of support in the more remote areas of northeastern Washington⁴⁹

⁴⁷Okanogan Independent, 7 October 1916. Omak Chronicle, 22 September 1916. Ibid., 6 October 1916. Spokesman-Review, 17 October 1916. Ibid., 20 October 1916. Ibid., 5 November 1916. Mary Avery, History And Government Of The State Of Washington (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961), 206. Seattle Daily Times, 8 November 1916, 1. The Times complained bitterly that Dill's letter writing campaign had won the election. Secretary of State, Abstract of the votes Polled in the State of Washington in the General Election of 7 November 1916 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

⁴⁸ Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington," 399.

⁴⁹Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of

Though it is impossible to prove that women swung the election to Dill, it is interesting to note their increased importance in the election of 1916 both on the national and local levels. Unhappy with President Wilson's opposition to national woman's suffrage, a group of women organized a cross country train trip to publicize their support for Charles Evans Hughes and demand for national woman's suffrage. The sojourners were highly controversial and gained their desired publicity and more. Women who supported Wilson met the train in San Francisco, as they had in other cities, in an effort to counteract the eastern women's monopoly of publicity. Sectionalism fueled the controversy. Many Westerners didn't take kindly to being told how to vote by eastern activists. However, the confrontation in San Francisco was peaceful.⁵⁰ Further demonstrating the new importance of women, in 1916 Montana elected the first woman, Jeannette Rankin, ever sent to the United States Congress.⁵¹

On the local level, even a cursory comparison of the election coverage provided in a small town newspaper reveals the increased importance of women in the election of 1916. Women simply played a much more prominent role in 1916 than ever before. In that year women's clubs provided more forums for candidates of both parties to express their views, while the political power women wielded caused candidates to tailor their messages so as to appeal to women. Corkery's last minute red herring is a good example of this power.⁵² Dill's promise to vote no on a war resolution, often tailored so as to be especially poignant to women, is

Washington in the General Election of 7 November 1916 (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington," 399.

⁵⁰Spokesman-Review, 18 October 1916, 1.

⁵¹Ibid., 10 November 1916, 1.

⁵²Ibid., 3 November 1916, 6.

another. Furthermore, on the Saturday before the election, the Democrats organized a parade in Spokane. Dill rode in a car followed by a dazzling white "peace" float and six women on foot.⁵³ National woman's suffrage would not be long in coming.

The war between the Democrats and Republicans had gone to the Democrats on the national level, to the Republicans in Washington state, and to Clarence Dill in Washington's Fifth district. But unbeknownst to the political combatants of 1916, the war in Europe would ultimately decide the fate of all parties.

As the fateful Spring of 1917 drew near, Dill's separation from the President's policies became evident in the Fifth district. In March, when Germany was making good on its threat to sink American shipping, opposition to him arose. One newspaper declared, "The first thing the people of this district ought to do is recall congressmen Dill, or keep him quiet until the war is over."⁵⁴

Mounting criticism from home did not deter Dill. As the crisis between Germany and the United States intensified he repeated his unpopular views:

I am opposed to this country's entrance into the European war. I am so opposed to our entrance into that war that if I were sure that by voting against this bill peace would be certain to continue until the end of that war I would vote against it. If I were sure that by voting for it peace would be ensured I would vote for it. If I were sure that by any amendment whatsoever peace would be certain I would vote for the amendment. But, Mr. Chairman, we cannot be sure of anything in times like these. We must act according to the information we have and the judgement we have.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., 5 November 1916, 8.

⁵⁴Ibid. 24 October 1916, 4. Wenatchee Daily World, 27 March 1917, 2.

⁵⁵Ibid. 2 April 1917, 2.

Dill might have added that there are times when we are better advised to forsake our own judgement in recognition of the fact that others may have greater experience and more information with which to form an opinion. Certainly that was the case in the first week of April 1917 when President Wilson weighed the actions of the Imperial German government against the interests and future of the United States, and found Germany to be a threat which could no longer be tolerated.

In his book Woodrow Wilson, August Heckscher beautifully and brilliantly describes the days and deliberations the President endured as he came to a decision that would mark "a turning point of the twentieth century."⁵⁶ Heckscher explains the degree to which the American decision for war rested solely upon Wilson's shoulders. In this judgement he agrees with Winston Churchill who wrote:

The action of the United States with its repercussions on the history of the world depended, during the awful period of Armageddon, upon the workings of this man's mind and spirit to the exclusion of almost every other factor.⁵⁷

Heckscher powerfully delineates how Wilson agonized over the decision, and the effect it would have on the American people and their future. Finally, Wilson came to believe with all of his being that America's future, indeed democracy and freedom throughout the world, were in greater jeopardy from a German victory than from American participation.⁵⁸ In this assessment Heckscher agrees with

⁵⁶August Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 433-434.

⁵⁷Winston Churchill, The World Crisis (6 volumes), III, (New York: Scribner's, 1927), 234.

⁵⁸Ibid. Heckscher's judgment regarding Wilson's motivation is the most recent in a long line of opinions rendered by some of the finest American historians. There can no longer be any doubt as to why Wilson took the United

Arthur S. Link, author of a multi-volume biography of Wilson, who argues that the primary reason behind the President's decision for war was "his conviction that American belligerency now offered the surest hope for early peace and the reconstruction of the international community."⁵⁹ On 2 April 1917 Wilson appeared before the combined houses of Congress and, in an eloquent oration reminiscent of Lincoln, asked that Congress recognize the state of war Germany had thrust upon the nation.⁶⁰

Wilson's address had no affect on the congressmen from Washington's Fifth district. On 6 April, having also agonized for months over his position, he rose from his seat on the floor of the House to deliver his own views on America's crisis. Dill had promised his constituency that he would vote no should America's entry into the war come to a vote; he now came to his own moment of self discovery. It is worth our space here to record in some detail his words on that day. They provide valuable insight into the man and the time:

Mr. Chairman, during the two years that I have been in this House I have heard Members repeatedly on important occasions say that we were face to face with a great crisis. But to-day, while nobody had talked particularly about that phase of it, I think everybody realizes that this is the greatest crisis that this Nation has ever faced, and probably one of the greatest crises of the world...

You can not induce me to vote the boys of America into the very jaws of hell and then say it is for the purpose of peace. I know better. On the other occasions I saw through a glass darkly. Now I see face to face.

Oh, if we were asked simply to vote to protect American rights I

States into war. Whether or not he was right will long be argued. Wilson clearly saw that the price of a German victory would be a world controlled by an outlaw nation which would present such a threat to the US that adequate defensive measures would compromise American liberty and institutions.

⁵⁹Arthur S. Link, Wilson: Campaigns For Progressivism and Peace, 1916-1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 414.

⁶⁰Ibid., 439.

would be willing and am willing to vote all the money and all the power that this nation possesses to protect its rights. But when you ask me to vote that this country shall put its Army and Navy and all its resources in alliance with one set of these belligerents in order to destroy the government of another, I refuse.

We have been told here that this is a war to establish democracy throughout the world. Well, it may be, but I have no faith in establishing democracy by joining my country's resources and its armies and navies with the ...monarchical government of Italy, with the government of England, call it what you will, a nation whose 500 years of history has left a bloody trail on every continent in the world; and I for my part will not take the step by which this resolution proposes, and go into the war on the side of the allies. This is a war upon the part of the allies for trade and territory. We have no interest in that. Our only interest is in our protection of our own rights.

So far as interfering with our rights are concerned, both groups are guilty. England created a war zone, filled it with submerged mines, and warned us to keep our vessels out. We protested, but we submitted. Germany created a war zone, filled it with submanrines, and warned us to keep our vessels out. We protested and sent our vessels in. They were destroyed. Had we sent our vessels into the English war zone they would have been destroyed. Under these circumstances shall we join with the group of nations to whose affronts we submitted because we refused to submit to the affronts of one of the other nations?

Gentlemen, I have thought about this as I have never thought about anything else in all my life. For nights I have been unable to sleep upon it. I have tried to bring myself to stand by the President's demand, thinking that possibly I was wrong. I thought how I might be able to go home and explain my vote for this resolution in some way or other. I thought I might say that the country had gotten into this situation, that it was every member's duty to show a united front, and that I had to be patriotic, but I knew that if I did that I would know in my own heart it was a lie. We are not into it. The test of unity of the nation is not before we go in; it is after we get in. This is the time when the Members of this Congress as representatives of the American people are to say whether or not we shall go in. For my part I am opposed to going in. [Applause]

I have no illusions as to the consequences of my action. Newspapers and those who let the newspapers think for them will cry out "Traitor!" and "Poltroon!" no doubt. Many who have been my political supporters in the past will now oppose me, but that does not matter. I am a young man. Few, if any, members of this House have had fiercer struggles to reach here than I have had. If I must leave public life because of my action to-day, I shall go, but it will be with head erect, able to look

every man and woman in the face, because I have kept faith. I do not know what the future holds for me, and I do not care. I refuse to do a thing which my conscience revolts against. I refuse to do a thing which in my judgment is the greatest crime ever perpetrated upon a free people, namely, drag them into this hell of a war by joining with the allies.
[Applause]

I believe more fully to-day than ever before in the powerful truth expressed in that old couplet-

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

But let me say this, gentlemen, that when this resolution passes, as it probably will, my opposition is over. I am an American from Revolutionary days, and I shall vote for every measure which is designed to help in winning this war. I believe that even though we go to war, the hope of civilization and freedom will remain with the American continent

.⁶¹

It was raining in the early morning hours of 6 April 1917. The House had been in session throughout the night when the time for voting finally arrived. Both Clarence Dill and William La Follette (Republican congressman from Washington's Fourth district) voted against American entry into the Great War.⁶²

Hours before the vote was taken Dill spoke to Wilson; he explained to the President that he had campaigned on a promise to stay out of the war, and that a straw vote of his district indicated his constituency disapproved of American entry into the war. Wilson responded that he believed that the people had changed. Dill said to the President, "Not in my district." Wilson then asked Dill if he would support the war once the country entered it. The young Democrat responded, "...When the boys were drafted and taken across the ocean the people would

⁶¹Speech of Clarence C. Dill before the House of Representatives 5 April 1917, CDP, Archives, EWSHS, Spokane. Congressional Record (5 April 1917), vol. 55, pt. 1, 344-347.

⁶²Spokesman-Review, 6 April 1917, 1.

support them, and that I would vote to help win the fight. He arose, thanked me, and said 'We are going into the war.' I left his office and never saw him again."⁶³

Dill could have gone along with most progressives throughout the country, and Washington state, and supported the President in the war.⁶⁴ Instead, he sided with men like George Norris - whose speech on the floor of the Senate was remarkably similar to Dill's - and Robert LaFollette who also opposed American entry into the war.⁶⁵ Interestingly, both Dill and Norris tell stories about colleagues who had said to them that they wished they had possessed enough courage to vote against the war.⁶⁶ H. C. Peterson, in his work, makes the point that socialists and pacifists argued that the vote against the war in the lower House would have been larger if congressmen had voted their convictions. Dill's experience, and Norris' in the Senate, would seem to support that contention.⁶⁷

At 3 A.M. on the morning of 6 April 1917 the House voted 373 to 50 in

⁶³Letter from Dill to Alfred J. Schweppe, 6 October 1976, CDP. In this letter Dill maintains that if he had the opportunity to vote on this question again he would not alter his vote. Letter from Clarence Dill to Henry Suzzallo, 6 April 1917, Henry Suzzallo Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle. In his letter to Suzzallo, written on the day the vote was taken, he explained that he could not follow Suzzallo's advice to vote yes on the war resolution.

⁶⁴Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement in Washington," 446.

⁶⁵H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War, 1917-1918 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1957), 5.

⁶⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 63. Richard Lowitt, George W. Norris: The Persistence of a Progressive (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 72.

⁶⁷Peterson and Fite, Opponents of War: 1917-1918, 5-10. One cannot help but wonder what circumstances would have to arise to compel the more timid members of Congress to straighten their backbones and vote their conscience. Dill, at least, was worthy of the office.

support of Wilson's war resolution.⁶⁸ The most difficult period in Clarence Dill's life was just beginning.

In his reelection campaign of 1918 Dill faced the accusation that his support of the war after American entry was simply a campaign claim. While this accusation was not accurate, there were substantial reasons for believing the charge was made in good faith.⁶⁹ First, Dill introduced a bill calling for publication of income tax returns.⁷⁰ His purpose, of course, was to expose profiteering amongst manufacturers of war goods. While there is no reason why munitions makers should reap inordinate profits from American wars, the propagating of such legislation placed Dill - in the public mind - in the anti-war camp.⁷¹ Secondly, Dill gained the approbation of the People's Forum, an anti-war group, for his anti-war vote in Congress. Unfortunately, this support came well after the vote had been taken, giving the impression that Dill was still thwarting American efforts to prepare for and wage war.⁷²

Finally and most importantly, Dill opposed the administration's plan to institute conscription.⁷³ His speech in the House of 27 April 1917 explains his reasoning.

⁶⁸Spokesman-Review, 6 April 1917, 1.

⁶⁹Letter from Clarence Dill to Henry Suzzallo of 6 April 1917, Suzzallo Collection.

⁷⁰Spokesman-Review, 11 April 1917, 18.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 16 April, 1917, 6. Seattle Times, 1 Nov. 1918, 10. Dill was so unpopular that Democrats in the neighboring Fourth district went to great pains to distance their candidate, Will E. McCroskey, from him.

⁷²Spokesman - Review , 16 April 1917, 6.

⁷³Wenatchee Daily World, 8 May 1917, 8.

As I said a moment ago, when this Congress declared war, those who declared it said it was for democracy. I did not think that was the real reason then, but I bowed to the will of the majority and am anxious now to do everything I can to help bring it to a successful conclusion. Since it is a war for democracy, we should wage it with that ideal in mind. The foundation principles of democracy are first, the right of the people to work their will in government; and second, freedom for the individuals who compose the people...The voluntary plan of raising an army is in harmony with our history as a people and it not only maintains the freedom of the individual citizen but permits the widest exercise of that freedom, while the conscription plan violates and overrides it absolutely and entirely.

The true test of the volunteer or any other system is whether or not it enables the Nation to win its wars and maintain its democratic principles and free institutions. Measured by that test, the volunteer system was a success in 1776. It was a success in 1862 and 1898, and if given a fair trial, it will be a success in this war. [Applause]⁷⁴

In such manner did Dill reinforce the belief that he was not a full-fledged supporter of the American war effort. Having voted against the war, he could not afford the luxury of continually opposing the government's war program if he hoped to avoid giving the impression that he did not support the war. The difference was too fine for most Americans to make.

One need not possess the genius of Dante to imagine the inferno which awaited Dill upon his return home. His prediction that the word "traitor" would be employed to describe his actions was prescient. Rufus Woods of the Wenatchee Daily World wrote: "May the Lord forgive this district for electing to office a man so ignorant, if he is ignorant, or a man so unsafe, dangerous, seditious, if he is not ignorant." Woods then defended Wilson: "Don't be misled, Wilson knew what he was doing and knows today. Roosevelt read the signs of the times even before Wilson."⁷⁵ The Democrat Club of Republic, Washington attacked Dill in much the

⁷⁴Congressional Record (26 April 1917), vol. 55, pt. 2. Apparently Dill was unaware of President Lincoln's instituting a draft in order to prosecute the Civil War.

⁷⁵Wenatchee Daily World 8 August 1917. Spokesman - Review, 6 April

same vein, calling him too stupid too represent the district in Congress.⁷⁶

In an effort to blunt the mounting criticism at home, Dill led a congressional junket to Europe ostensibly to ascertain why American troops were being treated poorly. Ten congressmen left for the front in October of 1917, crossed the Atlantic in a camouflaged transport ship and were wined and dined in both London and Paris. They quickly found that whatever problems had caused American troops discomfort had been corrected - though some of the Doughboys complained of not seeing any action.

On their way to the front the travelers went through the Marne battlefield. Dill was amazed to find women, old men, and children, working fields where once dead soldiers had lain by the thousands. Except for the cemeteries and an occasional bombed-out dwelling, little sign of the battle remained. The people reclaimed the fields so faithfully that errant German shells sometimes took crops instead of Frenchmen - sometimes both. As the entourage passed the neat cemeteries, the French officer guiding the congressmen unobtrusively saluted. Dill was equally impressed with the battlefield of Verdun, where outnumbered French forces had turned back the German onslaught at a cost of 400,000 men. For fear that the congressmen might add their names to the lists of casualties, the French refused to allow them to actually go to the front-line trenches. However, the resolute Americans persuaded the King of Belgium, after dinner one night, to permit such a trip.⁷⁷

Back home, Dill's rather obvious attempt to blight the withering criticism

1917, 1. Ibid., 15 November 1917. 4. Ibid., 29 December 1917, 4.

⁷⁶Ibid., 1 January 1918, 6.

⁷⁷Dill's notes on his trip. October\November 1917, Box 1, Folder, 2, CDP.

did not fool the newspapers.⁷⁸ One paper made light of the danger Dill faced while in the trenches, remarking that whatever German shells were fired near the Washingtonian, were no doubt fired in honor of his anti-war work in the U.S., not in anger.⁷⁹ Dill would have made better use of his time had he spent it actually furthering the war effort, and explaining his policies to his constituents, rather than touring Europe.

In December 1917, Dill returned home to do just that, albeit late and on a limited scale. In a speech at a Lutheran church, perhaps chosen because the congregation might be less hostile to Dill's policies, he regaled the crowd with tales of his trip to the front. He had brought several souvenirs home with him, and one - a saber - he waved above his head at certain emotional points. The Spokesman-Review covered the event and made the saber-waving congressman sound more ridiculous than he probably was. Nevertheless, nearly everything Dill tried backfired.⁸⁰ His own policies and actions were digging his political grave, but he received plenty of unneeded help. Newspapers falsely accused him of revealing the position of American troops and speaking to German officers.⁸¹ Less hot-headed citizens denied that Dill was a traitor, to them he was simply without a sense of moral right or wrong.⁸² In a letter to the editor of the Spokesman-Review W.H. Canfield, a Spokane area resident, was both right and wrong about Clarence Dill and thus neatly personified why Dill was being so

⁷⁸Spokesman-Review, 3 January 1918, 7.

⁷⁹San Poil Eagle, as quoted in Dill, Where Water Falls, 75.

⁸⁰Spokesman-Review, 31 December 1917, 6.

⁸¹Ibid., 30 December 1917. Ibid., 31 December 1917, 6.

⁸²Ibid., 3 January 1918, 7.

vilified. Canfield argued that all the Democrat cared about was getting reelected, hence his trip to Europe. While Dill's trip to Europe was unquestionably a campaign ploy, he certainly knew the way to get reelected was to have been more clearly supportive of the war. To have voted as he did took a great deal of political courage. Canfield was right, however, when he wrote, "the simple truth is that it is the people, not Mr. Dill, who have changed."⁸³ Woodrow Wilson had said the same words to the young congressman.

Dill returned to his district in July of 1918 to face a challenger in the primary, V. T. Tustin of Spokane - a highly regarded attorney. He also endeavored to serve his district as best he could. In his memoirs he tells the story of a young Native American soldier who was sentenced to jail time for deserting his guard post. Somehow the young man gained Dill's attention and explained his problem with the American Army's guard duty regulations, "Officer tell me to stand guard. He say to stand in front. Everybody see me there. I go behind bush or corner of building. Then I see enemy and kill him. Out in open, enemy see me and kill me."⁸⁴ Dill had a chat with the Commanding Officer and a compromise was reached.

Tustin attacked Dill personally rather than focusing on his war votes, and took advantage of the fact that the Democratic party's leaders had repudiated the congressman.⁸⁵ The Tustin candidacy seemed to have some support as crowds were described as more favorable to him than to Dill.⁸⁶ However, not all of

⁸³Ibid., 3 January 1918, 7.

⁸⁴Dill, Where Water Falls, 66.

⁸⁵Seattle P-I, 22 October 1918, 1. Ibid., 24 October 1918, 1.

⁸⁶Spokesman-Review, 22 July 1918. 7.

Clarence's supporters withered away in the political heat of the summer of 1918. Dan Drumheller, one of the early pioneers of Spokane and a fellow "builder," told Dill one day that he had just told a group of Republicans that though he thought Dill would lose this one, he was sure Dill's popularity would return and he would "...be sent back to Washington to help build the Pacific Northwest."⁸⁷

If political gall could get a man elected then Drumheller's prophecy would no doubt come true. Dill appeared before Spokane Democrats in July of 1918, and argued that he ought to be the party's nominee because he had the best chance of being elected, and more importantly, he would be the best choice to insure President Wilson's policies were adopted. His argument was based on his growing seniority on various committees and his demonstrated bullheadedness: "No clique of big businessmen, newspaper editors, or politicians ever have or ever can control me, and I shall go back to Washington as free to serve all the people as I have always been."⁸⁸ Wilson, however, did not personally endorse Dill's candidacy.⁸⁹

Over the previous four years Dill had developed a corp of supporters impervious to anything the newspapers might say about him. This corp, made up of farmers, women and progressives of all walks of life, stuck by him in his battle for reelection.

Just before the vote Dill and Tustin debated at Natatorium park in Spokane. The Democrat expected his challenger to continue his personal attacks,

⁸⁷Dill, Where Water Falls, 76. Drumheller's assessment of Dill as a "builder" was based on the congressman's work in opening the Colville Indian reservation.

⁸⁸Speech before the Spokane Democrats, July 1918, Box 2, Folder 14, CDP.

⁸⁹Seattle P-I 24 October 1918, 1.

but Tustin turned his attention to Dill's war votes. Clarence later came to believe that if Tustin had followed that strategy earlier he might have won.⁹⁰ As it was, Dill defeated Tustin, no doubt shocking many, and prepared to battle former state Supreme Court Judge Stanley Webster for his seat in Congress. In the Fourth district, Republican William La Follette (who had also voted against the war) was defeated in the primary.⁹¹

During any extended war, at least up to World War II, disease took more human life than the most devastating manmade weapons. World War I was no different in that respect than the Crusades. In the fall of 1918 an outbreak of extremely virulent influenza raged across Europe without respect to rank, wealth, or flag. Those returning from the continent brought the pestilence home where it killed thousands of Americans, especially the old and young, through the following winter.⁹² The disease struck Clarence Dill shortly after the primary election, and forced him into a hospital for nearly a month. His doctor believed the sickness would have killed him had he not abstained from alcohol as a general rule.⁹³

While Dill was incapacitated, Webster too came down with the flu and was forced to remain in bed; he did, however, draw the support of many influential Democrats.⁹⁴ Julius Zittel, former Democratic party state chairman and adviser to

⁹⁰Dill, Where Water Falls, 76.

⁹¹Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement In Washington," 445.

⁹²John M. Cooper, The Pivotal Decades (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1990), 320.

⁹³Dill, Where Water Falls, 76.

⁹⁴Seattle P-I 24 October 1918, 9. The Wenatchee Daily World of 24 October 1918, 4, reported that health officials had a dampening affect on the campaign as they advised candidates not to speak to crowds.

Governor Lister, threw his support behind Webster saying: "His (Dill's) continued opposition to the policies of President Wilson, his impossible speeches in Congress, and his general misrepresentation of American ideals call for his retirement to private life." Zittel, former Senator George Turner, and 92 other leading Democrats in Washington state signed a petition repudiating Dill.⁹⁵ Then too, Dill's opposition, as if it did not have enough material with which to defeat him, stooped to irrelevancies such as impugning his patriotism because his campaign manager's name - Frank Funkhouser - was of German origin.⁹⁶

The campaign drew national attention because both national congressional committees were giving aid. The Democrats hoped to hold the only Democratic seat in the state, while the Republicans hoped to re-establish their supremacy in northeastern Washington.⁹⁷ The Democrats flooded the district with campaign literature; the Republicans relied upon favorable press. The two candidates could not have presented a clearer choice to the voters. Webster was a "radical pro-war Republican," while Dill was his polar opposite.⁹⁸

Dill had the support of at least one newspaper, albeit far away; the Seattle Union Record favored him and castigated his critics for misrepresenting his war record.⁹⁹ When Dill's opponents weren't misrepresenting his record they were revelling in the inhospitable treatment he often received as he went from town to

⁹⁵Wenatchee Daily World, 31 October 1918, 10. Seattle P-I 22 October 1918, 1. Ibid., 24 October 1918, 1.

⁹⁶Ibid., 24 October 1918, 1.

⁹⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 24 October 1918, 4.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Seattle Union Record, 25 October 1918, 8.

town. In one rural hamlet a professional man, though a Democrat, ordered him out of his office and advised him to go to Germany where he would be welcomed and feel at home. In another town a Democratic committeeman, having received Dill's card, tossed it into the nearest cuspidor. At least one Washington newspaper grew weary - if only for a moment - of the Republican campaign, describing it as little more than a "flag raising ceremony."¹⁰⁰ Essentially the contest came down to whether one believed the war was waged for trade and territory, as Dill had said in his speech in Congress before the war vote; or whether one believed the war was being fought to preserve "civilization, christianity, and humanity" as Judge Webster declared.¹⁰¹

The war was still being waged when the voters of the Fifth district went to the polls on November 5, 1918. Many of them had relatives fighting in the fields of Northern Europe, and everyone knew someone involved in the war effort. Furthermore, George Creel's propoganda committee had infused the country with a white hot patriotism and a black intolerance.¹⁰² Under such conditions there was little doubt as to how the vote would turn out. Webster won.¹⁰³ Clarence Dill's lifelong dream was dead.

¹⁰⁰Seattle Times, 1 November 1918, 10. Wenatchee Daily World, 31 October 1918, 10.

¹⁰¹Seattle P-I, 22 October 1918, 1.

¹⁰²James Mock and Cedric Larson, Words That Won the War (New York: Russell and Russell, 1939), 3-10. In fairness to Creel it must be noted that Mock and Larson, while recognizing there were excesses in the Committee of Public Information's work, argue Creel and those who worked for him refused to print a great deal of material sent to them as being too incendiary.

¹⁰³Ibid., 8 November 1918, 4.

RESURRECTION

Clarence Dill had long since resigned himself to defeat, so when it arrived in November of 1918 he was not as crushed as might otherwise have been the case. Of course there was a transition period from public to private life, but it would not be long before the still young ex-congressman decided to rebuild his political career. Though Dill could not possibly have predicted in early 1919 how the nation would respond to the end of the war and the nature of the Versailles peace treaty, that response would assist him in his effort to revive his dream. As a result of his decision to try politics once more and of the nation's disillusionment with how "the war to end all wars" had turned out, by the Fall of 1922 he would find himself involved in one of the more interesting Senate elections in Washington state history. In that election Dill would skillfully analyze and expose his opponent's weaknesses while minimizing his own. In so doing the repudiated congressman of 1918 would rise from defeat to win Washington's Senate election of 1922.

Before Dill could hope to enjoy political success once again, he had to make some provisions for an income. To that end he and fellow war opponent Ed Keating (Colorado) agreed to start a weekly newspaper designed for railroad men. The purpose of the paper, christened LABOR, was to "provide uncensored news of the activities of Congress regarding labor legislation."¹ Keating became editor while Dill sold subscriptions to railroad unions around the country and lectured in support of the Plumb Plan - which called for continued government ownership of the railroads which had come under government control as a war measure.

¹Dill, Where Water Falls, 78.

LABOR became an enduring news provider for railroad unions.²

In addition to his work for LABOR, Dill decided to open law offices in Washington, D.C. and Spokane.³ In Washington Dill specialized in persuading members of Congress to pass bills concerning reclamation. Reclamation and irrigation had long been high priorities for Clarence. When he first went to Congress he had hoped to land seats on four committees: irrigation, public lands, Indian affairs, and weights and measures. He was successful in gaining a position on all four committees.⁴ He also lobbied for client's requests for pensions, and secured the admittance of client's relatives to the United States. However, Dill refused to lobby for other types of legislation, especially relating to big business.⁵

Though Clarence Dill's political life appeared to be dead after the election of 1918, he remembered Champ Clark's advice: "Don't stay licked." The former congressman began working in local politics whenever he found time, just as he had when a young man.⁶ The comeback trail was not easy. Newspapers refused to let him be. In March of 1920, he wrote a letter to the Seattle P.I. in which he castigated the paper's coverage of remarks he had made to the Democratic State Committee. The paper had quoted Dill as saying he found, ". . .the so called reds, I.W.W.'s, and Bolsheviki most reasonable people to talk things over with and

²Ibid. The Labor Journal, 18 July 1919, 1.

³Spokesman-Review, 4 October 1919, 10.

⁴Ibid., October 1916, n.p.

⁵Dill, Where Water Falls, 79.

⁶Ibid., 79.

believed they could be talked into the Democratic column."⁷ In his letter, Dill said:

This statement is absolutely without any foundation whatsoever. Either your reporter did not hear what I said, or he is a malicious, contemptible liar. I distinctly stated that the Democratic Party did not want the support of those who would use any method of reform other than the ballot. In the light of these facts I demand a retraction of the above statement.

During the four years I was in Congress, I was maligned, abused and lied about by the newspapers of this state as few public men in the Northwest have been. I never asked retractions then nor did I bring libel suits but I am no longer in office nor a candidate for office. I am a private citizen and as a private citizen I propose to avail myself of the protection afforded me by the laws of this state against character and citizenship assassins in the form of daily newspapers.⁸

In his letter Dill anticipated the P.I.'s defense, and pointed out that while he had stated he believed the working people of this country were reasonable and could be persuaded to vote the Democratic ticket, his use of the term "working people" could not fairly be held to be synonymous with "reds, I.W.W.'s, and Bolsheviki."⁹ Dill's problems with the newspapers of this period are instructive as to the frame of mind of the American middle and upper classes shortly after the war.

In spite of his ongoing battle with the newspapers, Clarence was determined to resurrect his political career. He recognized that a significant opportunity lay in becoming a delegate to the 1920 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. Dill actually campaigned to secure one of the delegate positions from the Fifth district to the convention. V. T. Tustin, who had opposed Dill in the 1918 primary, led a determined effort to keep Clarence from

⁷Seattle P.I., 20 March 1920.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

securing a position as a delegate.¹⁰

Dill met his adversaries head on at a meeting of the county's leading Democrats just before the convention. Clarence's friends and allies hoped to put Thomas Scott or Francis Garrecht over as temporary chairman. Tustin supported W.C. Jones. The anti-Dill forces won round one: Jones emerged as the clear favorite for temporary chairman.¹¹

On Saturday, May 2, 1920 the Spokane County Democratic party met in convention in Spokane. To everyone's surprise Dill rose to second the nomination of Jones as temporary chairman. The overflow crowd burst into applause. But when Dill's own nomination as one of the Fifth district's delegates came before the convention, Tustin's forces were ready. Several candidates were placed in opposition to Dill, and the Young Men's Democratic Club voiced strong objections to the former congressman's nomination. Moreover, veterans of W.W.I roundly denounced Dill. Indeed, his vote against American entry into W.W.I and the perception that he had hindered the nation's war effort were the primary sources of the antipathy toward him.¹² But Dill also had many supporters who reminded the delegates of his record as a progressive. When he took the floor himself he tried to persuade his listeners that Democrats had already passed on his war votes in 1918 when they re-nominated him for Congress. When the vote was finally taken Dill won easily, garnering more than twice as many votes as his nearest challenger. Spokane County was solid for Clarence Dill. However, his opponents vowed to

¹⁰Spokesman-Review, 30 April 1920, 9.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 1 May 1920, 5.

¹²*Ibid.*, 2 May 1920, 7.

carry the fight against him to the state convention.¹³

Just as they had been in 1912 Washington's Democrats were feuding in 1920. The disagreements were especially hot in King and Pierce counties and centered around such issues as clemency for those imprisoned for anti-war activities, government ownership of railroads, and justice for labor.¹⁴ Both counties sent dual delegations to Spokane - location of the state convention - where the combatants hoped to gain the approbation of the credentials committee.¹⁵

This split in the party mattered to C.C. Dill a great deal. At some point the Spokane County delegation would have to fall in line with one faction or the other. As the convention began Spokane County clearly favored the more conservative delegations from King and Pierce counties, Dill - of course - had voiced his support for the progressive faction headed by A. R. Titlow, national committeeman. But in the face of the opposition to his being named a delegate to San Francisco, Dill's primary concern had to be his base of support in Spokane County. Consequently, in the midst of the convention, he switched sides and backed the more conservative wing.¹⁶ Of course this outraged Titlow and his faction and when that group gained control of the convention there was a great deal more talk of dumping Dill.¹⁷ Ironically Spokane County eventually fell in line

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Seattle Times, 2 May 1920, 10.

¹⁵Spokesman-Review, 18 May 1920, 1.

¹⁶Ibid., 6.

¹⁷Ibid.

behind Titlow as well.¹⁸ Clarence had badly miscalculated. But all was not lost, not if the Fifth district's delegates would remain loyal to their former congressman. They did. In spite of lining up for the Titlow faction Spokane County insisted on Dill, and he still had some support in the rest of the district as well. He was on his way to the city on the bay.¹⁹

In San Francisco Dill used his friendship with many Democratic leaders to rise to the head of the Washington delegation. In addition he was instrumental in the selection of a chairman for the state's steering committee. Edward M. Connor had been the favorite but opposition to him arose in part because he was not in favor of Prohibition. Dill maneuvered to have Mrs. J.M. Simpson, who was safely dry, named chairman of the steering committee.²⁰ He even made a seconding speech for the vice presidential nominee, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thus beginning a relationship which would later have a profound affect on the development of the Pacific Northwest.²¹

While Dill was busy rebuilding his political career, the nation was in the process of providing a helping hand. The war had been disruptive to American life and institutions. However, some historians have observed that had it continued for several years war-time government intervention in the economy and social structure would have taken deeper root.²² Indeed contemporaries of Dill, like

¹⁸Seattle Times, 19 May 1920, 4.

¹⁹Spokesman-Review, 18 May 1920, 6. Ibid., 19 May 1920, 1.

²⁰Ibid., 29 June 1920, 2. Ibid., 30 June 1920, 1.

²¹Dill, Where Water Falls, 80.

²²Alan Dawley, Struggles for Justice (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1991), 211.

John Dewey, had hoped for just such an insertion of government into American life. But the war ended abruptly after "only" seventeen months of American belligerency. Consequently, state intrusion into the nation's social and economic structure as a result of the war was not well established when the war ended; and since war production had been sluggish at best, most Americans did not see that insertion as a success.²³

On the other hand, government had effectively cracked down on those opposing the American war effort. Thousands of dissenters were jailed, the most famous of whom was Eugene Debs - convicted of violating the 1917 Espionage Act. Debs went to prison in late 1918.²⁴ Ironically, many of those who opposed the war were the very persons who provided the spark to run the progressive engine. Alan Dawley makes this point nicely:

Not only did the suppression of dissent deny national progressives their most vital source of new ideas; they also lost vital links to the industrial working class and discontented farmers, the only groups big enough to stand up to big business. If the Progressives were knocked out of the running, it was in part by their own hands. Taken as a whole, the dynamic of war doomed the dynamic of reform to defeat.²⁵

Even George Creel, who was responsible for wartime propaganda, predicted disastrous results for the progressive movement because of the stifling of dissent.

Dawley captures Creel's admonition to Wilson,

All the radical or liberal friends of your anti-imperialist war policy were either silenced or intimidated. Democrats were 'afraid of raising the class

²³Robert Ferrell, Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 98-117.

²⁴Cooper, Pivotal Decades, 298-299.

²⁵Dawley, Struggles for Justice, 217.

issue against big-business Republicans, who had wrapped themselves in the flag ever since the preparedness campaign.' Unless this electoral verdict [the congressional election of 1918] was reversed, Creel predicted, 'the reactionary patrioteers will defeat the whole immediate future of reform and progress.'²⁶

Thus, in the effort to make the world safe for democracy abroad, the Wilson administration stifled it at home, extinguishing for a time the flame of progressive reform.

Dawley argues the move to the right in the twenties created a political dynamic between the United States, the new Soviet Union, and non-industrial countries which made it difficult for the United States to compete with the Soviets for the friendship of developing nations in or near the throes of revolution; the US always appeared to be on the side of order and corporate profit rather than on the side of revolution and human decency. Dawley believes that had the United States intensified its progressivism at home, rather than cutting it short, it would have been in a better position to mediate in Latin America.²⁷ As we shall see in later chapters, Dill would have agreed with him.

At the same time the United States was moving to the right at home, developments at the Versailles Peace Conference were ensuring an unfavorable American reaction.²⁸ The peace without victory Wilson had fought for escaped

²⁶Ibid., Ibid., 242.

²⁷Ibid., 252-253.

²⁸John Cooper, Pivotal Decades (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1990), 365-372. Dawley, Struggles for Justice, 239. In a brilliant argument Dawley suggests the United States moved to the right in the 1920's because class polarization made inhabiting the middle ground impossible. Progressives were forced to chose between siding with entrenched capital and forsaking the mediating work of commissions, or taking the part of insurgent workers and farmers in a hopeless effort at liberal reform. The middle class opted for security.

him. Europeans appeared to have learned little from four years of bloodshed. Secret agreements and vengeance ruled the "peace makers," rather than Wilsonian mercy and justice.²⁹

Disillusionment with the peace hammered out at Versailles coincided with and perhaps exacerbated the American response to an apparent Soviet threat, primarily manifested in the form of radical labor and intellectuals sympathetic to the communist movement. Thus, the U.S. entered a period known as the Red Scare.³⁰ At this time many Americans became convinced the effort to make the world safe for democracy had been a mistake.³¹ A few Washingtonians even remembered Clarence Dill's warning that the Europeans were all equally guilty of barbarous behavior and neither worthy of American help nor sympathetic to our ideals. (His thoughts on the Europeans are clearly developed in his response to Wilson's war address on pages 76-78). Thus by the early twenties, Americans had grown disillusioned with their foreign crusade, wary of philosophies which sprang from foreign ground (communism), and now concentrated on saving at home what had been lost abroad. Though the country moved to the right in this effort, those who had voted against the war because it seemed to them to unnecessarily involve the U.S in foreign entanglements became less despicable, their words now seeming almost prophetic. Of course the rightward lurch the nation experienced after the war presented different challenges to Dill's progressivism. But the isolationism and xenophobia which was a part of that turn to the right helped provide him a door to

²⁹Ibid., 244. Cooper, Pivotal Decades, 333-340. Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson, 562-579.

³⁰Dawley, Struggles for Justice, 233.

³¹Ibid., 243

a political resurrection.

Other developments helped Dill as well. A sharp recession hit the United States in 1920-1921 and lingered through the decade for farmers and Washington's lumber men - thus making the reelection of Republican congressmen and senators in the state problematic in 1922.³² Moreover, national Prohibition split rural areas from urban and became a political issue not to be ignored.³³ Washington was no less affected by this rural-urban split over Prohibition than any other part of the country.³⁴ The state also mirrored the nation in its opinion as to how energetically Prohibition ought to be enforced. As Norman Clark observes, sentiment for repeal of Prohibition in Washington was not strong in the early and mid twenties, but sentiment for strict enforcement was weak as well. In other words, the nation firmly decided for ambiguity.³⁵ Alan Dawley captures the disagreement in the nation over Prohibition:

Samuel Gompers described prohibition as a class law against workers' beer, and in the same vein, one urban Congressman undoubtedly spoke for the majority of wage earners in denouncing the howls of malicious joy issuing from rural America in "inflicting this sumptuary prohibition legislation upon the great cities. It preserves their cider and destroys the city workers' beer."³⁶

³²Seattle P.I., 1 September 1922, 6. Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 99-100.

³³David Burner, The Politics of Provincialism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 78-102.

³⁴Ficken and LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History, 98.

³⁵Norman Clark, The Dry Years: Prohibition and Social Change in Washington (Seattle: University of Washington, 1965), 179-206. Frederick Merz, The Dry Decade (New York: Doubleday and Doran, 1931), 130-159.

³⁶Dawley, Struggles for Justice, 231-214.

Though Prohibition was the law of the land, it owed its existence more to the fervor of patriotism than to the popularity of abstinence. Moreover, those who opposed Prohibition were rapidly gaining political strength. As David Burner notes, cities from 1922 on voted Democratic and wet consistently and were gaining in political strength. He further states, "At one time the prohibition movement had received support from all classes - both urban and rural; by the twenties it was rural and fundamentalist."³⁷ Nineteen twenty is generally regarded as the year in which more Americans came to live in cities than in rural areas. In Washington state, that bench-mark had been reached in 1910.³⁸

Though the state generally voted Republican, the potential for Democratic victory in the cities lay close to the surface. The trick lay in retaining the dry vote of the rural areas, while securing the generally wet Democratic vote of the city - no easy assignment. It would take the shrewdest of politicians to define the election so as to accomplish that task. Moreover, in Washington state, even uniting the disparate rural-urban Democratic vote would not be enough to secure victory. A significant number of Republican cross-over votes would have to be snatched in order for a Democrat to be elected.

Dill, then, faced a daunting political challenge if he hoped to unseat Miles Poindexter in 1922. There were, however, some rays of hope penetrating through the Grand Old Party's blanketing fog. The 1922 election was far from being an election decided in an era of normalcy, regardless of Harding's appeal to return to that state; rather there were serious undercurrents of unrest, many related to prohibition, but others separate: the bonus question, crime, ship subsidies, labor

³⁷Burner, Politics Of Provincialism, 99.

³⁸Ficken and LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History, 96.

unions, and Americanism versus Bolshevism. The feeling in America was one of nervousness not normalcy. David Burner summarized some of the conditions which would have facilitated a Dill comeback:

The election of 1922 is significant both in the Democratic showing and in the number of the party's urban successes. Because President Harding, in his overwhelming victory of 1920 had carried many areas never before won by his party, the Republican Congress occupied a vulnerable position in 1922. Factionalism, Harding's ineffectiveness as a party leader, and the resignation of Will Hays as National Chairman also contributed to Republican weakness; moreover, the party out of power usually picks up seats in an off-term election, and the depression of 1920-1922 - had generated dissatisfaction with the politics of normalcy.³⁹

Such was the political and social milieu in which Clarence Dill attempted to resurrect his political career.

Though not officially campaigning, Dill's address to the Jackson Day Banqueters at Colfax, Washington, in early 1922, certainly did not hurt his senatorial aspirations. He supported Harding's and especially Hughes' effort to restrict naval arms while carefully avoiding associating himself with those who believed the country should unilaterally disarm. He had learned well. He concluded his remarks attacking the Republican handling of the economy:

The big bankers told us last spring it [the recession] would all end in the summer. In the summer, they said wait till fall. In the fall, they said it will be over when the new year comes. Now they say times will be better in the spring. Soon we shall have completed the cycle of the seasons but the winter of our national misfortune is still upon us with no prospects of a thaw.⁴⁰

³⁹Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 103-104.

⁴⁰Speech at the Jackson Day Banquet, Colfax, Washington, 13 January, 1922. CDP, EWSHS, Spokane. One can easily see how Dill could sway crowds and persuade opponents to his viewpoint. He truly had a gift for oratory.

Two months later in an address before another Jackson Day gathering in Tekoa, Washington, Dill sought to energize his fellow Democrats for the coming campaign. He called their attention to the rule of political history dating back to the Civil War that the party which elects the mid-term Congress, elects the next President. Then he turned his attention to the case of Truman H. Newberry, a senator from Michigan who had been elected with the help of enormous private funds. Now openly a candidate, Dill had announced in January, he spent the balance of his address lambasting Newberry and Poindexter's vote to seat the notorious Michigan senator.⁴¹

Newberry had spent well over \$250,000 in his bid to win the 1918 Republican primary in Michigan. The Senate debated whether or not to seat him because he had been convicted of violating both state and federal election laws which capped campaign expenditures at \$3,750 and \$10,000 respectively. However, the Supreme Court overturned his conviction, ruling Congress had no authority to regulate state primaries.⁴² Poindexter had voted to seat Newberry because Republicans in the Senate were in the midst of attempting to thwart President Wilson's League of Nations.⁴³ The Republicans needed every vote they could muster and Newberry represented another vote against the league. In considering the Newberry case, the Senate could not help but condemn his campaign expenditures declaring such disbursements to be "contrary to sound

⁴¹Seattle Star, 28 January 1922, 2.

⁴²Mary Lou Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1963), 138.

⁴³Howard Allen, Poindexter of Washington: A Study in Progressive Politics (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 566.

public policy, harmful to the honor and dignity of the Senate and dangerous to the perpetuity of a free government." However, the authors of this indictment voted to seat Newberry in spite of the above findings. Dill correctly vilified such hypocrisy.⁴⁴

Speaking at still another Jackson Day banquet, Clarence sought to impress upon Seattle Democrats the need to be the party of progressivism. He also cautioned Democrats that their only hope of defeating Republicans lay in securing at least one in four Republican votes. Campaigning as conservatives, Dill warned, would not win the day. He was, of course, attempting to persuade the conservative wing of the party, led by Justice Stephen Chadwick, of its folly. Much to Dill's consternation, Chadwick spoke the same evening and attacked the recall and referendum, favorite tools of progressives. In June of 1922 Washington's Democrats were still at odds and thus at a loss as to how to win an election.⁴⁵

Opposition to Poindexter took more than one form in 1922. The Farmer-Labor party decided at its convention to oppose Poindexter through the third party method (rather than uniting with Democrats or progressive Republicans).⁴⁶ The senator had angered the Farmer-Labor party through his alignment with the Harding administration on such issues as the extension of federal regulation of business, tax policy, and government assistance to farmers.⁴⁷ But the Farmer-

⁴⁴Dill's speech before the Jackson Day banquet at Tekoa, Washington, 15 March 1922, CDP.

⁴⁵Seattle P.I., 4 June 1922, 6.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 238.

Labor party's decision failed to gain the support of significant farm and labor groups. The Washington State Federation of Labor, Washington State Grange, various railroad brotherhoods, and other groups opposed the Farmer-Labor party's strategy, preferring to work with either of the two main parties.⁴⁸ Moreover, the grass-roots organization of the Farmer-Labor party lacked strength; the party was able to field a full slate of candidates for local and state legislative offices in only two counties.⁴⁹ Nevertheless the party's animosity toward Poindexter was representative of a growing statewide disenchantment toward the senator, especially among progressives. In the face of such animosity, Poindexter felt the best policy was to ignore the mounting criticism and stress his achievements, especially his successful sponsoring of legislation providing for survey work on the Columbia Basin Project.⁵⁰

Poindexter had experienced a long and interesting career. He had come from Virginia to Washington, opened a law office and was active in politics through the 1890's. After Bryan's campaign in 1896, he switched parties, forsaking the Democrats. In the first decade of the twentieth century he became a Roosevelt progressive and was elected to Congress in 1908. He supported federal regulation of railroads, the income tax, and progressivism in general. In 1910 he was elected to the Senate seat Dill hoped to deprive him of in 1922.⁵¹ In 1912 he

⁴⁸Seattle P. I., 4 June 1922, 7.

⁴⁹Hamilton Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party, 1918-1924" (M.A. University of Washington, 1962), 170.

⁵⁰Seattle P.I., 20 July 1922, 1.

⁵¹Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 6-12. Krause, Prohibition and the Reform Tradition, 33-34.

was the only senator to declare himself a member of the Bull Moose party and as such supported Theodore Roosevelt for president. Though Woodrow Wilson defeated Roosevelt, Poindexter supported Wilson's progressive legislation such as the Federal Reserve Act, the Clayton Anti-trust Act, and the Federal Trade Commission.⁵²

Howard Allen, Poindexter's biographer, argues that the senator's progressivism stemmed from his desire to support the middle class against big business, large financial institutions, trusts, and railroads, while preserving that class against the challenges from labor unions, socialists, the urban working class, and immigrants. Thus Poindexter's progressivism fit nicely Richard Hofstadter's thesis as to who the progressives were.⁵³ The basis of Poindexter's progressivism, then, was not humanitarianism or egalitarianism, but an effort to forestall radical social reform with moderate reform, while preserving the middle class from the onslaught of the groups at either end of the social scale. If the social and economic conditions which pressured the middle class changed, or were perceived to have changed, Poindexter could be expected to change as well. W.W.I did indeed transform how the middle class in America regarded itself and its enemies. Consequently, during and after the war, Poindexter moved to a more conservative political position arguing that America's greatest enemies were the socialists and Bolsheviks, rather than unrestrained capitalism.⁵⁴

While Poindexter was convinced of his invincibility, other Republicans

⁵²Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 85.

⁵³Ibid., 166. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage, 1960), 218-222.

⁵⁴Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 246, 247.

sought to deprive him of his seat before Dill could turn the trick.⁵⁵ George B. Lamping, Seattle Port Commissioner, was one of those who declared his intention to unseat the senator. In a campaign swing through southwest Washington he attacked Poindexter on his "Newberryism" and his move toward the right.⁵⁶ Mrs. Frances Axtell, an influential Republican party leader, also ran for the party's nomination. Mrs. Axtell's candidacy demonstrated just how far women had come. She was taken more seriously than several of the male candidates including Judge Austin Griffiths.⁵⁷

Three other Republicans sought the nomination but were of lesser status. Lamping was considered the strongest candidate. There was a concerted effort on the part of progressive Republicans to settle on one of the above, but the effort came to naught. Both Lamping and Axtell agreed to withdraw if Griffiths would also acquiesce, then one of the three would be selected to challenge Poindexter. Griffiths refused to cooperate and withdraw from the race. Lamping and Axtell then remained to challenge Poindexter along with Griffiths and the other three minor candidates.⁵⁸ Poindexter, not unhappy with the way his Republican challengers handled the campaign against him, anticipated victory in the primary.

Dill himself encountered opposition in the Democratic primary; Lyman

⁵⁵Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 129. Seattle P.I., 30 July 1922, 1. Norman Clark, The Dry Years: Prohibition and Social Change in Washington (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), 186.

⁵⁶Seattle P.I., 20 August 1922, 12. Ibid., 1 September 1922, 6. Ibid., 6 September 1922, 1.

⁵⁷Seattle P.I., 6 September 1922, 1. Ibid., 30 July 1922, 1.

⁵⁸Seattle Union Record, 23 September 1922, 1. Tacoma News Tribune, 12 September 1922, 3. Seattle P.I., 6 September 1922, 1.

Seelye, of Bellingham, and James Longstreet of Port Townsend, both hoped to derail his campaign, though they never caused him much anxiety.⁵⁹

The results of the primary surprised no one except Colonel Lamping who was unduly optimistic.⁶⁰ He ought not to have been: Poindexter won handily; Dill was nominated easily; and James Duncan of the Farmer-Laborites advanced that party's cause. However, neither Dill nor Duncan had captured the minds of the voters. Only 10,548 people bothered to vote for Dill and fewer still showed up at the polls for Duncan.⁶¹ In the Republican primary Mrs. Axtell placed third, defeating Judge Griffiths and two other men. Lamping placed a distant second.⁶² Ominous, however, for the hopes of Miles Poindexter was the fact that the combined tally of the traditionally progressive candidates amounted to well over 50% of the vote.⁶³

Three candidates with vastly different philosophies now battled for Poindexter's Senate seat. James Duncan of the Farmer-Labor party was a radical who lashed out at the "interests" and was fanatical over Prohibition.⁶⁴ Dill occupied the middle ground in this three legged race with his dry progressive platform.⁶⁵ Of course Poindexter stood solidly in the conservative corner as his

⁵⁹Tacoma News Tribune, 11 September 1922, 1.

⁶⁰Seattle P.I., 12 September 1922, 1.

⁶¹Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party," 176.

⁶²Tacoma News Tribune, 14 September 1922, 1. Abstract of the votes polled in the general election of the state of Washington, 7 November 1922.

⁶³Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 251.

⁶⁴Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party," 180, 182.

⁶⁵Clark, The Dry Years, 187.

support for the Harding administration attests.⁶⁶ Surprisingly, Poindexter did not give-up on either the labor or progressive vote.⁶⁷ Secretary J. J. Davis of the Labor Department came to Washington to help Poindexter hold the labor vote, and William E. Borah also made a few speeches in an attempt to convince voters Poindexter still held progressive credentials.⁶⁸ In addition, several newspapers came to Poindexter's aid in his endeavor to retain voters. The Tacoma News Tribune reminded the electorate of Dill's anti-war vote and Duncan's radicalism.⁶⁹ Poindexter also charged that Dill was no Democrat, implying he was too radical for the state Democratic party and would not fit in back in Washington.

Poindexter's blast backfired as Judge Stephen Chadwick, the state Democratic Party's symbol of conservatism, came to Dill's aid late in the campaign. Chadwick strongly endorsed Dill, and openly campaigned for him. The new support energizing his campaign, the would-be senator attacked Poindexter in the language of the Old West, "I'll hang Miles' hide on the Proscenium arch and shoot it full of holes."⁷⁰

Dill's strategy included more than verbal gunplay. He sought to characterize the election as a contest between progressivism and conservatism - in spite of Chadwick's support.⁷¹ There was more to this strategy than Dill's

⁶⁶Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 226.

⁶⁷Seattle Union Record, 18 October 1922, 2. Ibid., 19 October 1922, 8. Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 251.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Tacoma News Tribune, 27 October 1922, 1.

⁷⁰Seattle P.I., 1 November 1922, 8.

⁷¹Everett Daily Herald, 23 October 1922, 1.

antipathy toward facing Poindexter along party lines, a contest he would surely lose. In the Republican primary, though Poindexter had won, he had polled only 84,000 votes against his progressive challengers' 113,000 votes. Clearly progressivism was alive and well in Washington state, and there for Dill to take advantage of should he succeed in convincing voters the progressive vote was a vote for Dill.⁷²

In his effort to convince the voters to vote their politics and not their party, Dill gained the support of the Scripps newspapers (which included the Seattle Star) and the Seattle P.I.⁷³ The latter paper, which had become a part of the Hearst chain in December 1921, blasted Poindexter's votes on the Esch-Cummins bill.⁷⁴ Esch-Cummins was the conservative response to the Plumb Plan and featured the return of the railroads to private ownership. Moreover, labor feared a provision of the bill would make it difficult for labor organizations to effectively represent their membership. Even the conservative New York Times agreed. Critics of the bill predicted freight rates might rise as high as 40% above current prices. Not surprisingly, farmers, labor, and many progressives opposed Esch-Cummins. Nevertheless, Congress approved the bill; the railroads were returned to private hands in 1920.⁷⁵ The P. I. also castigated Poindexter for his vote on Newberry, for failing to secure a shingle tariff, and for allowing appropriations for

⁷²Seattle P.I., 1 November 1922, Part II, 25.

⁷³Ibid., 17 October 1922. Seattle Star, 27 October 1922.

⁷⁴Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer Labor Party," 173.

⁷⁵The Labor Journal, 5 March 1920, 1.

Bremerton's naval yard to slip relative to the Mare Island, California yard.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the paper argued Dill kept his word, voted the wishes of his constituency, and would vote the progressive program if elected.⁷⁷

Poindexter retained the support of the more influential papers in the state. The Seattle Times characterized Dill as a dangerous radical, while east of the mountains the Spokesman-Review reminded voters of the Democrat's war votes and described him as "shifty" and "untrustworthy."⁷⁸ The Everett Daily Herald attacked the Hearst owned P.I.'s support of Dill appealing to the provincialism of Washington's voters.

Senator Poindexter has especially won the condemnation of the Hearst press because he has supported a number of things these papers have condemned, among them President Harding's Four Power Pact, designed to keep the peace of the world by insuring peace in the Pacific Ocean. First to last he has worked with the Harding administration, seeking to further those things which the President has striven for, and this may account for some of the bitterness with which Hearstism, from its stronghold in New York City - 3,000 miles removed from this state - has assailed him.⁷⁹

While a number of the state's labor papers such as the Seattle Union Record, The Labor Journal, and the Tacoma Labor Advocate supported Duncan, Dill was picking up support from labor groups.⁸⁰ In October the Seattle Building

⁷⁶Seattle P.I., 17 October 1922. Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 248.

⁷⁷.Seattle P. I. 1 November 1922, Part II, 25.

⁷⁸Spokesman-Review, 7 November 1922. Seattle Times, 2 November 1922.

⁷⁹Everett Daily Herald, 6 November 1922, 16.

⁸⁰Seattle Union Record, 11 October 1922, The Labor Journal, 20 October 1922, 3, Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer Labor Party," 180.

Trades Council - representing twenty-five A.F.L locals - overwhelmingly endorsed the Democrat. In addition the railroad brotherhoods came on board the Dill campaign because he had favored the Plumb Plan.

In his campaign Dill harped on Poindexter's Newberry vote and his move to the right. In fact the two were linked. Poindexter was accused of voting to seat Newberry under the influence of Jules Bache, a New York banker and William Todd, a New York shipbuilder with interests in the Puget Sound region.⁸¹ Bache was one of Poindexter's largest contributors and was cited as proof Poindexter had become a tool of Eastern interests.⁸² Allen, in his biography of Poindexter, argues the senator had not been unethical in his relationship with Bache, but his prominence on the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, his support of a big Navy during the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference of 1922, combined with his acceptance of significant campaign contributions in 1920 (a failed bid for the presidency) and 1922 from Bache and Todd provided plenty of ammunition for Dill to blast the senator.⁸³

As we have seen, based on his experience in the war, Poindexter had changed his political philosophy. He came to believe government intervention in the economy was a dangerous thing. The senator also opposed federal development of Muscle Shoals, supported lower taxes on the rich, and argued against further legislation to help farmers. Poindexter held the latter position in spite of the fact Washington's farmers were suffering from substantial loss of

⁸¹Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 248. Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 138.

⁸²Ibid., 137.

⁸³Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 248-249.

income. Farmers were further angered over his support of the higher Republican tariff (the Fordney-McCumber tariff of 1922).⁸⁴ This move to conservative positions on key issues combined with his relationship with his Eastern friends - ethical or otherwise - clearly placed Poindexter outside of the progressive tradition. This, combined with the Democrat's deft handling of the Prohibition issue, put Poindexter's return to the Senate in doubt.

Dill, as mentioned above, faced the difficult assignment of uniting rural drys with urban wets in the Democratic party and securing enough Republican cross-over votes to win the election. The trick was to define the election in terms of Poindexter's conservatism as opposed to making it a referendum on Prohibition. Should the election degenerate into a Prohibition debate, Dill's Democratic party would likely fracture and the natural Republican strength would ensure Poindexter's re-election. Poindexter now played into Dill's hands, for he himself was wary about taking a stand on the "controversial Prohibition question during a time when he wanted very much to attract the support of those who had little interest in Prohibition (Eastern wealth). In this, as in other issues, Poindexter neglected the attitudes and impulses of his Washington constituents . . ."⁸⁵

If Poindexter had struck a staunch pose for Prohibition, he would have forced Dill to respond. In such circumstances it is highly likely Poindexter would have lost fewer votes than Dill, as the Republican party was less divided over Prohibition than the Democrats. Robert Cole, though not relating his argument to Prohibition, agrees that Poindexter's "Republican constituency was a much larger

⁸⁴Ibid., 238, 241.

⁸⁵Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 47.

one within which to absorb defections."⁸⁶ In the summer of 1922 a Literary Digest poll showed 87.2% of Washington's voters favored Prohibition of some kind, 12.8% were opposed. If David Burner is correct in his assessment of who the vast majority of those 12.8% were, most of them were workers in the city, registered as Democrats.⁸⁷ Krause supports Burner in his contention that urban labor was largely against Prohibition.⁸⁸ Hence Dill had more to lose than Poindexter if Prohibition became the defining issue of the Senate campaign.

Norman Clark argues Prohibition was a significant though not primary issue in this campaign, and Dill exploited it well. This is true, but not in the way Clark suggests. Clark would have us believe Dill exploited Prohibition by making it an issue.⁸⁹ He did not. The Democrat kept the issue in the background for good reason, preferring to run against Poindexter's record and fearful Prohibition would split his Democratic urban-rural coalition. Cole supported this contention in his chapter on the 1922 election when he barely mentions Prohibition's role in this campaign. He had correctly recognized the issue was not a major one between the candidates, but missed the significance of Poindexter's failure to make it one.⁹⁰

Compounding Poindexter's problems concerning Prohibition was the fact that Prohibition officials were appointed on the recommendations of senators and congressmen. Since those officials were largely seen as inept, much of the blame

⁸⁶Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 78.

⁸⁷Literary Digest, 8 July 1922.

⁸⁸Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 58-62.

⁸⁹Clark, The Dry Years, 188.

⁹⁰Cole, "The Democratic Party In Washington State, 1919-1933," 58-95.

fell upon the allegedly wet Poindexter.⁹¹ He was afraid to raise the issue, fearing a dry backlash. Dill, then, was successful in dictating the terms of the campaign, again demonstrating his political acumen.

Moreover, Dill effectively argued the election was about progressivism and not about parties, thus grabbing a significant number of Republican progressives and mitigating the damage from Duncan's Farmer-Labor candidacy on the left.⁹² The twin pillars of Dill's campaign, Poindexter's vote on Esch-Cummins and Newberry (which together demonstrated Poindexter's reactionary record), cut across party lines. Dill's strategy was nothing short of remarkable. It only remained to be seen whether or not he could pull it off.

One of Dill's primary concerns was nullifying the appeal of the Farmer-Labor candidate James Duncan. Duncan in his idealism and naiveté was no match for the shrewd and seasoned politician from eastern Washington. Duncan was so inept he managed to alienate the Whatcom County Farmer-Labor organization when, on a campaign trip through the county, he attacked the Democrats unmercifully. The Whatcom County Farmer-Laborites had been trying to fuse with the local Democrats.⁹³

Duncan could not even hold the loyalty of Pierce County which had given him about one third of his primary votes. Early in October the Pierce County Farmer-Labor Party joined forces with the local Democrats to elect local and legislative candidates.⁹⁴ Homer Bone, an influential Pierce County Farmer-Labor

⁹¹Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 107-111.

⁹²Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 68.

⁹³Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party," 180.

⁹⁴Ibid., 179.

party member and candidate for the state legislature, threw his support behind Dill. Bone arranged for a meeting between Dill and the county's Farmer-Labor leadership which resulted in the county's Farmer-Labor party supporting Dill instead of Duncan.⁹⁵ This was a coup of no small importance for Clarence. If the Democrat were going to win the election it would probably be by a few thousand votes. The Pierce County Farmer-Labor party might provide just the necessary cushion.

As noted above, Dill successfully determined the ground upon which Poindexter would be forced to campaign; he was not inclined to allow Duncan to do the same to him. Throughout the campaign Duncan wailed that Dill was not campaigning on the Democratic party platform. The Democrat ignored him and successfully sought the help of farmers and labor who refused to support the Farmer-Labor candidate, Duncan. In fact, Dill's effort to woo labor was so successful that by late October the vast majority of the state's A.F.L. locals had thrown their support to the Democrat.⁹⁶ Indeed, labor supplied a heavy share of Dill's financial support.⁹⁷

There was one other issue in the campaign to which the contenders gave lip service, though it had little bearing on the outcome of the election. The wild dreams of some central Washingtonians, whose minds fixated on water in that dry and windswept land, received mention from the two major candidates in the

⁹⁵Terry Slatten, "Homer T. Bone, Public Power and Washington State: Progressive Politics in the Mid 1920's" (M.A. University of Washington, 198?, date unavailable from library records), 21, 36, 37, 39, 40.

⁹⁶Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party," 181.

⁹⁷Seattle Union Record, 30 September 1922, 6. Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 148. *Ibid.*, 155.

campaign. For years farmers in the Columbia Basin had sought some method of using the waters of the great river to irrigate lands which as a rule were five hundred feet above the water's surface. There were two plans extant during the 1922 election for irrigating the Columbia Basin. One, known as the gravity plan, sought to bring water via canal from northern Idaho to the Grand Coulee which would then act as a reservoir. The other sought to dam the great Columbia near the mouth of the Coulee and then pump water into the reservoir. The former plan had the support of the business leaders of Spokane - especially the Washington Water Power Company - as it would not involve the production of rival electrical power plants. The latter plan had the support of the Central Washington's farmers and merchants, as it would mean enormous development of the Columbia's electrical and irrigation potential. Both Poindexter and Dill called Spokane home, but Dill favored the pumping plan (the dam), while Poindexter favored the gravity plan and the interests of private power in Spokane.⁹⁸

As the campaign moved into its final week, Dill continued his assault on Poindexter's Esch-Cummins vote while Poindexter attempted to change the subject. The railroad issue fit Dill's strategy nicely because farmers were paying higher shipping rates on goods they were both selling and buying, while workers were paying higher prices for items bought in stores.⁹⁹ Poindexter continued to characterize Dill as a dangerous radical and reminded voters of his challenger's war

⁹⁸Everett Daily Herald, 10 October 1922, 2. Spokesman-Review, 4 November 1922. Bruce Harding, "Water from Pend O'reille: The Gravity Plan for Irrigating the Columbia Basin," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 45 (April 1952): 52-60.

⁹⁹Seattle P.I., 2 November 1922, 1.

record.¹⁰⁰ It was not an argument likely to influence those who would decide the election: those progressives considered potential cross-over votes. Meanwhile, Poindexter's supporters were frustrated that Dill had not made his position known on some issues - a standard complaint - but also indicative of Dill's setting the table.¹⁰¹

Late in the campaign, pre-election predictions from around the state were published in the newspapers, and no doubt threw a scare into Poindexter. Independent voters were thought to be falling into Dill's camp while Farmer-Labor candidate James Duncan was not extracting many.¹⁰²

The Democrat now responded to just about the only blow Poindexter had landed throughout the campaign: his alleged support for the League of Nations. Dill answered Poindexter's charge head-on, the Seattle P.I. and the few other papers favorable to the Democrat printed his response which was as clever as the rest of his campaign. He argued that while he was opposed to the insanity of war, he had high hopes nations would settle their differences peacefully. As to the United States joining the League, he believed such a momentous decision should be left to popular vote. Poindexter did not chose to argue with that position . The issue died.¹⁰³

Still hopeful of retaining progressive support, or perhaps terrified of losing it, Poindexter persuaded Senator Charles McNary of Oregon - a progressive of unimpeachable credentials - to campaign for him in Seattle. McNary primarily

¹⁰⁰Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 252.

¹⁰¹Tacoma News Tribune, 2 November 1922, 2.

¹⁰²Seattle P.I., 2 November 1922, 6.

¹⁰³Ibid., 6 November 1922, 2.

boosted Poindexter for the work he had done and would do on the Columbia Basin and because of the fact that he would become chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, a committee which was of profound importance to Puget Sounders.¹⁰⁴

On November 7 Washingtonians went to the polls. Early returns gave Poindexter cause for relief, Spokane County showed him 5,000 votes ahead and the Spokesman-Review reported him leading on the west side of the Cascades as well. In other words, first news from the polls indicated Poindexter was leading in the cities. This was not good news for Dill. When one speaks of the West, one almost automatically thinks of open spaces. When one thinks of a politician from eastern Washington, one might be led to surmise such a politician, in order to be successful, has to appeal to the people inhabiting those great open spaces. This is simply not true. Granted, Dill could not afford large losses in those open spaces, but in order to win he had to capture the urban areas. There simply were not enough votes in the eastern Washington grasslands to elect him, not even should he receive all of them.

Hours before the election the mayors of Spokane, Bellingham, Tacoma, and Seattle predicted a Dill victory.¹⁰⁵ Though early returns, as indicated above, favored Poindexter; by the day after the election, Dill had squeaked out a 2000 vote lead.¹⁰⁶ But Poindexter's forces hoped later reporting rural districts would push their man over the top. It was a forlorn hope; Dill clung to his lead and upset the two-term Republican Senator. Election reports showed Clarence had

¹⁰⁴Seattle Times, 2 November 1922, 1. Ibid., 3 November 1922, 1.

¹⁰⁵Seattle P.I., 6 November 1922, 2.

¹⁰⁶Tacoma News Tribune, 8 November 1922, 1.

taken all three of Washington's most urban counties: King, Pierce, and Spokane, and had essentially split Washington's rural counties with Poindexter. Farmer discontent in 1922 over Republican unwillingness to solve their problems and suspicions about whose side Poindexter was on (on many issues including Prohibition) kept Poindexter from carrying rural districts.

In fact, Prohibition is the issue Poindexter stumbled over. If he had pressed the Prohibition issue - made Dill campaign as the devout dry he was - much of Dill's Democratic support in the city would have slipped away, probably just staying home or perhaps going to Duncan (another dry, but more radical on labor than Dill).

Moreover, if Poindexter had emphasized his prohibitionist stance, some of those dry cross-over Republican voters would have stayed by his side. Here then is an enigma. Dill clearly defined the election in terms of Newberryism and Esch-Cummins, using those issues as proof of Poindexter's conservatism. Very much down-played was Dill's assertion Poindexter was not as dry as he wanted voters to think. Indeed, this aspect of Dill's campaign was conducted at the level of a whisper primarily in rural areas. Yet it is not too much to say the election turned not on Newberry, but on Prohibition, because Dill deftly minimized the subject, and Poindexter ineptly failed to make it a central issue.

The 1922 Senate election has brought extended comment from historians. Mary Lou Krause, whose Master's thesis examined Prohibition and reform, analyzed various interpretations of this election, but never reached a firm conclusion except to say prohibition was not a primary issue.¹⁰⁷ Howard Allen, in his biography of Poindexter, argued the senator met defeat because he lost the

¹⁰⁷Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition," 158-174.

progressive vote due to his move to the right. He also believed Poindexter's preoccupation with foreign affairs in 1921-22 (naval disarmament) contributed to his political demise in the fall of the latter year because Washingtonians were more concerned with local problems such as farm income.¹⁰⁸ Allen's analysis, however, never goes beyond Poindexter's own assessment made shortly after the election.¹⁰⁹

Dill himself credited his victory to labor support, thus recognizing how important urban Democrats and labor voters were to his campaign.¹¹⁰

In his study of the Democratic party in this period, Robert Cole observed that the "spotty" nature of Republican prosperity, and the fact progressivism was not dead, led to the progressive Democrat's toppling of Poindexter. In addition, he argues Dill's victory demonstrated Democrats could compete in elections to national office.¹¹¹ Cole is correct, as far as he goes. But as we have seen, there is more to the story.

James Kreiss, in his analysis of elections from 1920 to 1962, argued:

the significance of the election of 1922 is the fact that the counties in eastern Washington that had gone so strongly for Harding in the election of 1920, and had seemingly abandoned reform, supported the reform candidate who in this case was a Democrat in the election of 1922. Possibly then, the vote in 1920 had been more within the party and less a vote either in favor of or in opposition to reform, as the question of reform was less an issue in 1920.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 237, 238.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 252-254.

¹¹⁰Telegram from Dill to William Short, n.d. November 1922, Washington State Federation of Labor Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

¹¹¹Robert Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 80-85.

¹¹²James Kreiss, "A County by County Analysis of the Voting Trends in

Indeed, the question of reform was less an issue in 1920 than in 1922. In 1920, though farm prices were falling, the election turned on Wilson and especially the League of Nations. In 1922, the recession brought reform to the fore and Dill capitalized on it. Hamilton Cravens clearly demonstrated this when he observed that Dill had won "precisely those areas where the Farmer-Labor forces were the most active, and where reform candidates had, since 1896, received the strongest support."¹¹³

Kreiss, however, is wrong when he argues Duncan's candidacy had the greatest effect in western Washington. Kreiss believes Duncan took votes from Poindexter in several rural western Washington counties.¹¹⁴ This can hardly be the case since Poindexter and Duncan were polar opposites politically. Surely whatever effect Duncan had on the election, it was to hurt Dill, not Poindexter. A comparison of the election of 1922 with the Senate election of 1928 is instructive. While no two elections are exactly alike, the 1922 and 1928 elections are similar enough in issues and candidates to offer valid comparisons. The primary difference is that in 1928 there was no Farmer-Labor party candidate. A look at the 1922 election results of three rural western Washington counties - Mason, Lewis, and Kitsap - shows Dill losing by a total of over 1,200 votes.¹¹⁵ Duncan took over 3,500 votes in the same three counties. Six years later, with no Farmer-

the State of Washington from 1920-1962" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1964), 14-16.

¹¹³Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-labor Party," 184.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁵Secretary of State. Abstract of the votes Polled in the State of Washington in the General Election 7 November 1922 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

Labor candidate to contend with, Dill won all three counties with a plurality of over 3,000 votes.¹¹⁶ In addition, in the five congressional races in 1922 all five districts saw Republicans - opposed by Farmer-Labor candidates - victorious. The Farmer-Labor party hurt the Democrats not the Republicans.¹¹⁷ However, Kreiss accurately concurs with Allen, Cole, and Cravens when he argued that progressivism had survived into the twenties in Washington.¹¹⁸

Poindexter, too, believed progressivism had survived into the twenties and focused his campaign on securing the progressive vote in spite of the fact his definition of progressivism had changed. Poindexter argued the essence of progressivism was protecting the people from their enemies. But for him, the enemies had changed. Before the war, the enemy had been corporate America, monopoly, and greed. After the war the enemy was Bolshevism and a frightening diversity.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately for Poindexter, Wilson's War Administration had taken much of the fire out of the radical movement in America while World War I vastly increased the wealth and power of American business. By 1922 most Washingtonians were more concerned with their economic well being than with foreign enemies.

Poindexter's politics changed about the time he began to entertain presidential ambitions. His presidential hopes of 1920 and Senate campaign of

¹¹⁶Ibid., 6 November 1928.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 7 November 1922. Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 253.

¹¹⁸Kreiss, "A County By County Analysis of the Voting Trends in the State of Washington From 1920-1962" 14-16. Allen, Poindexter of Washington, 582-583.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 565.

1922 were fueled by wealthy merchants from the East. Thus, Poindexter abandoned the progressive movement at a time when many of its friends were also abandoning it. However, the people of Washington were not ready to give it up, and were not taken in by Poindexter's sleight of tongue. They threw Poindexter out and put Clarence Dill in the Senate.

The Washington state Senate election of 1922 turned on Dill's exposure of Poindexter's reactionary record, and on his own skillful welding of the disparate elements of the Democratic party - in spite of the Prohibition issue which he shrewdly downplayed. The exposure of Poindexter's turn to conservatism depended a great deal on newspapers such as the P.I.. Indeed, that paper's support may have been crucial to Dill's success. But one cannot ignore Dill's skill as a politician. The Democrat used Poindexter's conservatism to define the election in terms of ideology and integrity rather than party, and was thus able to appeal to voters outside traditional Democratic party ranks (i.e. rural progressive Republicans). At the same time, he garnered the support of the majority of urban labor. Combining the rural element with the urban was an accomplishment worthy of the Squire of Hyde Park, who would do essentially the same thing ten years later on a national scale. But for now, Clarence Dill was on his way back to the nation's capitol as Washington state's junior senator.

Years later, while writing Where Water Falls, he observed that fate, or the vagaries of chance, often change life in ways impossible to foresee:

. . . had I been reelected in 1918 I would probably have won in 1920 with little chance of future defeats. I would not have risked defeat by running against Senator Miles Poindexter in 1922.¹²⁰

¹²⁰Ibid., 78.

Of course, if Dill had failed to gain Poindexter's Senate seat, that failure may have had significant consequences for Washington's long term economic development. For that development was largely dependent on abundant and cheap hydroelectric power, and Clarence Dill would play a leading role in the creation of that power.

"A SON OF A WILD JACKASS"

Washington's junior senator was no stranger to Washington, D.C. Before he was even elected he knew which Senate committees he wanted to serve on. Premier among them was the Interstate Commerce Committee which had a direct affect on railroad legislation. Railroads, of course, were the life blood of Spokane as they were of many western cities. Dill had no trouble securing the position on the Interstate Commerce Committee. In addition, he was appointed to the Irrigation and Reclamation Committee, Public Lands and Surveys, and Indian Affairs, all of which impinged directly on Washington's interests and those of the West.¹ But Dill was interested in more than the provincial concerns of his state. The nation's foreign policy - as one might expect from someone who had voted no in regard to American entry into World War I - was a significant concern, as were the integrity of the Senate, and the economic crisis America's farmers found themselves in by the early 1920's.

In the first few months of the session, Dill developed a close association with George Norris of Nebraska. The two men found they agreed on nearly every issue.² Norris first noticed Dill when the latter refused to approve the administration's nomination of Frank B. Kellogg as Ambassador to Great Britain.³ Dill opposed Kellogg's nomination because he believed the appointment of "lame duck" senators and congressmen to government positions was not in the public's

¹Congressional Record (9 March 1925), vol. 67, pt. 1.

²Dill and Norris were among the western progressive-insurgent politicians Ray Tucker described as "Sons of the Wild Jackass."

³Congressional Record, 11 December 1923, Vol. 65, Pt. 1, 235. Only eleven senators voted against Kellogg, among them were Norris, Burton Wheeler, and Royal Copeland.

best interest (Kellogg had been defeated in his Senate race in 1922).⁴ As Dill left for his Senate office after the Kellogg vote, Norris took him by the arm and said, "Dill, I want to congratulate you on that vote against Kellogg. That vote was your Declaration of Independence. From now on the Democratic machine leaders here know you will vote your convictions. They won't be shocked."⁵

Dill was very much interested in how the United States used military force in the world. Thus, he kept an eye on American policy in Latin America. In the twenties, the United States was concerned that leftist revolutionary movements in Latin America not harm American business and citizens, or compromise American strategic interests. Dill believed American policy was essentially inimicable to the interests of the vast majority of Latin Americans, if not the ruling class. In his opposition to American policy he often followed the lead of his friend, George Norris. Indicative of both men's' feelings regarding the Coolidge administration's Latin American policy was their response to the President's decision to send US Marines back to Nicaragua in 1926, in order to protect American property and lives. Coolidge intended to support the government of Adolfo Diaz in this endeavor. However, rumors circulated Washington that the President's primary purpose was to impress Mexico with the wisdom of refraining from nationalizing American property - especially American oil interests.⁶

Norris chafed at the Coolidge administration's policy: He regarded Coolidge's sustaining of Diaz and supporting him with the American military - though he was not the legally elected President of Nicaragua - as essentially

⁴Dill, Where Water Falls, 101.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Lowitt, George Norris, 372.

meaning, " the United States was at war with Nicaragua."⁷

Norris did not stand alone in the Senate in denouncing American policy toward Mexico and Nicaragua. Dill, in fact, led the attack on the Coolidge administration along with senators Heflin (Alabama) and La Follette (Wisconsin).⁸ The senators were concerned the administration's policy would lead to war with Mexico over issues that, should roles be reversed, the United States would claim sovereignty over. Consequently to not allow Mexico to decide for itself the fate of foreign companies seemed hypocritical to insurgent Republicans and progressive Democrats.⁹

Returning to the Nicaraguan question, Dill argued for another election, saying, "We cannot defend a policy of making the Nicaraguan people have a government they don't want." Meanwhile, the administration had been working on just such a solution. Unfortunately, Coolidge's hoped for elections did not resolve the Nicaraguan problem.

Dill remained opposed to the administration's policy in Latin America. He was truly irreconcilable on this issue. In January of 1928, he said, "I am opposed to the armed forces of America being used to protect investments of Americans abroad and for the purpose of passing laws to impose more burdensome loans on the Nicaraguan people." The only use of force Dill would countenance in Latin America was the use of the Marines to "see that Americans got safely away from

⁷Ibid., 373.

⁸Congressional Record (14 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 2. New York Times, 15 January 1927, 1-2.

⁹Ibid.

Nicaragua."¹⁰ Dill was much more comfortable with Coolidge's successors, Hoover and Roosevelt, and their policies in Latin America; though even they did not entirely live up to Dill's complete withdrawal program.

The question of representative government concerned Americans as well as Nicaraguans. Dill was in part elected on the issue of whether or not Miles Poindexter ought to have voted to seat Truman Newberry. He was not about to let a similar controversy cause him political trouble. The case of William S. Vare of Pennsylvania was strikingly similar to the Newberry case in that it concerned the amount of money Vare had spent in his 1926 campaign. The Senate deliberated for almost two years on the question of seating Vare.¹¹ As with the Latin American imbroglio, Dill was allied with Norris and other progressive senators, but it was the Democrat from Washington who openly led the fight against Vare while Norris called the shots from behind the scenes.¹²

On 10 December 1926, Dill presented a resolution to declare Vare disqualified to present his credentials of election. His purpose was to, "Close the door of the Senate against these men before they arrive here."¹³ He claimed Vare had spent more than \$800,000 in his campaign. Dill's argument was that the expenditure of such enormous sums defeated the purpose of primary elections:

When candidates for public office were chosen by political conventions big business and political bosses often managed to nominate

¹⁰New York Times, 21 January 1928, 3.

¹¹Lowitt, George Norris, 434.

¹²Ibid. New York Times, 10 December 1926, 1-2. Congressional Record (3 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 1.

¹³New York Times, 10 December 1926, 1-2. Frank L. Smith's right to take his seat was also being challenged.

the candidates of both leading parties, the result being that, regardless of who lost, big business and the political bosses always won.

Those who led the movement for the adoption of the direct primary through the country some years ago believed the primary would end that practice . . . but during the past few months we have had some of the most flagrant examples of the violation of the spirit and purpose of the primary in the history of American politics. Candidates for the nomination for the United States Senate in Pennsylvania and Illinois have spent more money to secure nominations for the Senate than national campaign committees have ordinarily spent in the whole country to bring about the election of a President.¹⁴

Using the words of Aaron Burr, Dill reminded his colleagues they must be careful about the make-up of the Senate:

This house is a citadel, a citadel of law, of liberty, and order. It is here, here in this exalted refuge, here if anywhere, that resistance will be forever made to the silent arts of corruption, and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hand of the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor.¹⁵

Norris and Dill fought the seating of Vare for nearly two years. Finally, by a vote of 58 to 22, their long battle ended in triumph. The Senate denied William S. Vare a seat. It was a victory in principle, but practically speaking, meant little. The governor of Pennsylvania appointed high tariff lobbyist Joseph R. Grundy to the vacated seat.¹⁶

Such victories probably had little long term significance for America's future, but the same cannot be said for the efforts to deal with the nation's farm problem in the 1920's. Men of good will and serious minds of both parties grappled with the leviathan of low crop prices in that decade; in the end they

¹⁴Ibid. Ibid., 12 December 1926, Section 2, 10. Congressional Record (3 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 1.

¹⁵Congressional Record (20 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 2.

¹⁶Lowitt, George Norris, 434-435.

grappled to the death. The failure to solve the farm crisis has generally been laid at the feet of the successive Republican administrations of that decade.¹⁷ But both parties were guilty of advancing chimeras as viable solutions. Ultimately, both parties failed and that aggregate failure must eventually come to color interpretations of this era. As a member of the Senate Dill must shoulder his share of this collective responsibility.

The farm problem of the twenties was in many respects a consequence of the Great War. During that conflict American farmers supplied much of the food needs of the Europeans. Prices rose, times were good. Farmers put more acreage into production and often bought new equipment, sometimes borrowing money in the effort.¹⁸ Inevitably the war ended as did the boom market; prices sagged and farmers found making a living difficult let alone repaying loans. The logical solution was to plant and reap more in an effort to make more money. But the increased supply resulting from these desperate efforts drove prices ever lower. Other factors increased despair. Local taxes, with the expansion of state services such as roads, often rose. And competition for markets from European farmers, who often enjoyed government subsidies, increased as well.¹⁹

In their despair and anger farmers and farm groups advocated a number of plans to reverse their fortunes. But by the mid-twenties the program known as McNary-Haugen came to be the preferred solution of many concerned with the condition of agriculture in America. The plan took its name from Senator Charles

¹⁷This interpretation is perhaps best expressed in Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957).

¹⁸Donald McCoy, Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 307.

¹⁹ Ibid.

McNary of Oregon and Representative Gilbert Haugen of Iowa, chairman of the congressional committees concerned with agriculture.²⁰ McNary-Haugen was a complex plan for raising the price of key agricultural commodities without restricting production. The bottom line was that an Agricultural Export Corporation, headed by the secretary of agriculture, was to establish a fair price for a given commodity and then sell whatever excess there was overseas. Farmers were to make up losses through an equalization fee to be levied on each unit of produce they sold covered under the plan (not all commodities were covered). Supporters of the plan believed that the fee would be far less than the profits accrued by higher domestic prices.²¹

By 1924 other ideas for solving the farm problem - crop diversification, mechanization, easier credit, soil conservation, and better farm management among others - had all actually contributed to the problem: too much food.²² Farmers now turned to McNary-Haugen with a zealotry usually reserved for religious crusades. Indeed, farm misery had long been a radicalizing element in America causing many of the nation's rural inhabitants to abandon doctrines of individualism in the hope government would solve their problems.²³ The 1920's were no different. But the Republican administration of Calvin Coolidge had not solved the problem and did not appear likely to do so. Coolidge's own thoughts in 1924 had not gone much beyond the approval of using cooperatives for better

²⁰Schlesinger, The Crisis of the Old Order, 107.

²¹John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy: 1921-1933 (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 198.

²²McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 308.

²³Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 96-97.

marketing and easier credit for farmers.²⁴

Support for McNary-Haugen came primarily from the West in 1924; Southerners were split over the plan and it did not seem to protect their primary crop - cotton - adequately anyway.²⁵ George Norris, the old Nebraska war-horse, was one of the McNary-Haugen leaders in the Senate. But the farm block simply didn't have the votes in 1924 to pass the plan in the face of the administration's opposition.²⁶ But Norris knew he could count on Dill when it came time to help farmers. The Washingtonian voted for McNary Haugen every time it came before the Senate.²⁷ Thus Norris came to regard Dill highly and included him prominently in what he called "our progressive bunch."²⁸

By 1926 Coolidge faced increasing pressure to do something dramatic about the plight of farmers. America's agriculturists were now determined that government should address their lack of purchasing power and were more united behind yet another version of McNary-Haugen.²⁹ But Coolidge too had bestirred himself and developed his own plan for agriculture. The President's plan included more cooperative marketing, better cooperation between business and agriculture, increased credit, and improved education; in other words, more of the same past and futile policies.³⁰ But Coolidge's plan was enough to split the vote of those

²⁴McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 234.

²⁵Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 169

²⁶Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 198.

²⁷Congressional Record (23 May 1928), vol. 69, pt. 9, 9557.

²⁸Lowitt, George W. Norris: The Persistence of a Progressive, 1913-1933, 408.

²⁹McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 234.

who favored farm legislation. McNary- Haugen died again.³¹

Still the advocates of farm relief, Dill included, would not go away. In 1927 a new McNary-Haugen bill, this time including features which bound the South to the fate of the West and even garnered some support from the nation's businessmen, found its way to the halls of Congress. The South now supported the bill because cotton and tobacco were included on favorable terms, and because the region's farmers were perhaps the poorest in the country.³² Businessmen concerned about agriculture supported the bill because it posited the creation of a Federal Farm Board to administer the program which was to work through existing cooperatives rather than abolish them. However, the 1927 version of McNary-Haugen still envisioned artificial support of prices and overseas dumping.³³ Nevertheless, a number of business leaders such as Bernard Baruch and Owen D. Young now supported the measure. But Coolidge had to be most chagrined by the mutiny of a number of regular Republicans and his own vice president, Charles Dawes. When asked about Dawes' defection the taciturn Coolidge remarked, "I have noticed that the McNary-Haugen people have their headquarters in his [Dawes] chambers."³⁴

In response Coolidge grew defensive and recited Republican efforts through the decade on the behalf of farmers: easing credit, encouraging cooperative marketing, decreasing taxes, and promoting more efficient

³⁰Ibid., 308.

³¹Ibid., 310.

³²Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 198.

³³Ibid., 198-199. New York Times, 19 February 1927, 2.

³⁴McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 323, 324.

transportation. Then he advocated his program of 1926 as the answer to the farm problem in 1927.³⁵ It was no where near enough to satisfy desperate farmers. In the early months of 1927 the Senate began debate on the new McNary-Haugen farm relief bill.

As interested as he was in the farm problem and devoted as he was to helping farmers, Clarence Dill did not take a substantive role in the Senate debate over farm relief in early 1927. As we shall see he was wholly preoccupied with the problems of an American phenomenon: radio.³⁶ But he was on the Senate floor to record his vote in favor of McNary-Haugen in February and it was a good thing he was. For the fight in the Senate was fierce and close, Vice President Dawes eventually interceded to pass the bill.³⁷

Pressure now built on Coolidge not to veto the measure. Westerners talked about tariff retaliation against eastern business interests if Coolidge did not sign McNary-Haugen. Moreover, there was open talk amongst western Republicans of dumping Coolidge and supporting another candidate in 1928 more sympathetic to farmers.³⁸ George Norris, who had grown disillusioned with Republican leadership over the years, had come to believe that only new ideas in the White House could solve the farm crisis.³⁹

The pressure on Coolidge to sign his name to McNary-Haugen was enormous. To his credit he did not cave in but remained true to his convictions.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Radio in America was unique. Its growth and creativity far exceeded what was occurring in other countries, so too did its problems.

³⁷Ibid., 325, New York Times, 19 February 1927, 1.

³⁸New York Times, 20 February 1927, 1,16.

³⁹Lowitt, George Norris, 298-299.

There were a number of reasons why the President vetoed the 1927 farm bill. John Hicks neatly summarized Coolidge's motives:

However it might be phrased, the McNary-Haugen bill as Coolidge saw it, asked government to do what government had no right to do. It called for price fixing, for an improper delegation of the taxing power, and for the creation of a vast and cumbersome bureaucracy. It was economically unsound, for the higher prices it contemplated would lead to greater overproduction and larger surpluses, while the disposal of American goods abroad at cut-rate figures would arouse foreign resentment and promote retaliation.⁴⁰

Coolidge himself remarked that the bill "is not framed to aid farmers as a whole, and it is furthermore, calculated to injure rather than promote the general public welfare."⁴¹

The political fallout from Coolidge's detonation of the farmer's hopes for relief was quick and severe. The New York Times, though it approved the President's decision, argued that his action had opened the campaign for president; and Republican farm block leaders announced that the McNary-Haugen bill would be a casus belli at the 1928 convention. These Republicans even had a favorite candidate already selected, former Governor Frank Lowden of Illinois.⁴² Of course Coolidge foiled his enemies by choosing not to run in 1928.

But Westerners, even more than others sympathetic to the farmer's plight, were livid enough over Coolidge's veto to try to pass McNary-Haugen one more time before the 1928 election. To that end McNary, ironically a personal friend of Coolidge, went to great lengths to modify his bill so as to meet the chief

⁴⁰Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 199.

⁴¹McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 325.

⁴²New York Times, 26 February 1927, 1.

executive's objections.⁴³ But equally important to farm block Republicans was the effort to make farm relief the major issue at the 1928 convention. If Coolidge vetoed a modified McNary-Haugen bill then surely substantial support would swing behind a candidate acceptable to farmers, or so it was thought.⁴⁴

In 1928 Clarence Dill had more time to devote to the farm problem. He took an active interest in seeing McNary-Haugen pass the Congress one more time. Ironically though, his greatest contribution to the measure lay in removing Washington's fruit growers from inclusion in the bill. In this effort Dill followed the lead of New York senator Royal Copeland (D).⁴⁵ In his remarks on the floor of the Senate Dill cited the hundreds of letters and telegrams he had received from Washington's fruit growers in opposition to being helped by McNary-Haugen. He said:

They [the growers] want the apple industry to have no connection whatever with this marketing system. They have built up their own marketing system [cooperating amongst themselves]. They have built their own plan of storing their fruits. The boxed apple industry is in a stable condition, and we do not want the apple business of the Northwest in any way handled by any board or under legislation of this kind."⁴⁶

Copeland and Dill carried the day and the provision covering fruit was entirely dropped from the 1928 McNary-Haugen bill.⁴⁷ The farm relief measure passed Congress again in May 1928, this time by substantial majorities.⁴⁸ Dill, of course,

⁴³McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 198, 326.

⁴⁴New York Times, 2 April 1928, 2. Ibid., 9 April 1928, 1.

⁴⁵Ibid., 12 April 1928, 17.

⁴⁶Congressional Record (11 April 1928), vol. 69, pt. 6, 6217.

⁴⁷New York Times, 12 April 1928, 17.

⁴⁸McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 327.

voted for the bill.⁴⁹

In his efforts to represent the wishes of farmers Dill gained the approbation of George Peek, one of the original supporters of McNary-Haugen and Chairman of the Agricultural Conference. Peek wrote a letter for Dill addressed to Albert Goss, Master of the Washington State Grange, in which he praised Dill for his efforts on the behalf of farmers. The letter said in part, "C.C. Dill has loyally supported the farmers in their fight and should have farmer's support for reelection."⁵⁰

But the Westerner's efforts were in vain as President Coolidge wasted little time in vetoing McNary-Haugen once again. In spite of McNary's efforts to modify his bill, the equalization fee which had so concerned the President in 1927 was still the cornerstone of the legislation. Coolidge, buttressed by his Attorney General, vetoed the 1928 version of McNary-Haugenism with what historian Donald McCoy described as "unrestrained ridicule."⁵¹ Some of the President's more incisive comments included, "cruelly deceptive, tending to delude the farmer, autocratic authority, repugnant to the spirit of our institutions, dangerous nullification, and bureaucratic tyranny of unprecedented proportions."⁵² The New York Times agreed calling the bill "shuttlecock."⁵³ There was no hope of overriding the presidential veto.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Congressional Record (April 12, 1928), vol. 69, pt. 6, 6283.

⁵⁰Ibid., 22 May 1928, vol. 69, pt. 9, 9426.

⁵¹McCoy, Calvin Coolidge, 327.

⁵²New York Times, 24 May 1928, 1.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid. Congressional Record (25 May 1928), vol. 69, pt. 9, 9880.

Historian John Hicks, not generally given to applauding the Republican administrations of this era, agreed with Coolidge that McNary-Haugen was ill-advised legislation which would create more problems than it solved. Specifically, under the bill farmers would be encouraged to grow more not less, the very problem which gave rise to the farm crisis.⁵⁵ But Hicks, again displaying sober judgment, lamented the veto and the caustic attitude, so out of character for Coolidge, which the President displayed in vetoing McNary-Haugen.⁵⁶ It allowed Americans to believe that somehow their President didn't care, that it demonstrated, as Rexford Tugwell said, "a stubborn determination to do nothing."⁵⁷

In response farm-bloc Republicans went to their 1928 convention determined to find a candidate who would represent their interests. But McNary-Haugenism had passed its heyday. Few of the rank and file Republicans needed to make a demonstration at Kansas City showed up. In those circumstances McNary-Haugen's leaders had little hope of success. In short the convention sustained Coolidge. McNary-Haugenism was gradually replaced by new ideas, espoused by new leaders. In the effort to pass those new ideas Clarence Dill would make his presence known.

In the 1920's Democrats and Republicans alike failed to come to grips with America's farm problem. Democrats like Dill, with their farm-bloc Republican allies like George Norris, advanced a plan which would not have worked in the long run. Republicans recognized that, but were themselves victims of their own ideology: the antipathy toward using government to help individuals, specifically

⁵⁵Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 200.

⁵⁶Ibid., 201.

⁵⁷Ibid., 200.

farmers. Wracked by East\West dissension and rural\ urban antagonism, along with the traditional political party split, Americans were unable to agree on a solution that would fully address the farm problem. Thus the American government fiddled while nearly half of its citizens burned with the despair of poverty. Ultimately all Americans paid the price.

The pain of America's farmers was not lost on Washington's junior senator. He had grown up on a farm, knew poverty and hard work, and had eventually become disillusioned with that life. There is no record of his emotions concerning this subject, but the plight of farmers must have gnawed at him; his concern for reclamation, public power, and even radio must have in some way been a response to the pitiful sight of farm families attempting to draw a living from exhausted land. As we shall see, Dill devoted much of his life to improving the lot of farmers.

The foregoing issues occupied significant portions of Dill's time, but in themselves they would have hardly constituted a record of achievement sure to return him to the Senate in 1928. Fortunately for the young senator circumstances combined to give him both an issue which meant a great deal to the voters of Washington (a tariff on shingles and lumber), and an opportunity to substantially raise his prestige in the Senate (the necessity for regulation of radio). Toward the end of his term, Dill was active in the fight for a shingle\lumber tariff. But before turning his attention to Washington's desire for a such a tariff, Dill addressed himself to the noise coming from his constituent's radio sets, and thus defined his first term in office.

RADIO DAYS

In 1895 a young and tireless Italian inventor, Guglielmo Marconi, succeeded in sending radio signals a few kilometers and in so doing affected the life of Clarence Dill, not to mention profoundly impacting the twentieth century. For in the late 1920's Washington's junior senator became the Senate's recognized expert on radio through his efforts in crafting and passing the legislation which became the basis for American broadcasting law. For two and a half decades after Marconi's discovery radio remained of limited use: merchant ships usually carried a set, navies made a wireless standard equipment, and a few curious tinkers built both receivers and transmitters for private use. But with the passage of a few years, radio enthusiasts eventually became so common in America Congress felt constrained to bring some order to their world, thus passing the Radio Act of 1912 which required anyone operating a radio transmitter to procure a license from the Department of Commerce.¹

As the century entered its third decade radio was about to evolve into a different creature. The first commercial broadcasting stations cast their initial signals near the end of 1920. Others followed quickly. In July of 1922, 382 stations vied for air space; by the end of the year there were 569 stations.²

The number of stations combined with primitive technology created

¹Erik Barnouw, History of Broadcasting in the United States, (vol. 1), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 10-12, 16-17, 28-32. Joel Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission with Respect to the Programming of Radio and Television Broadcasting Stations" (Unpublished Legal Brief, 1961), 5. CDP, EWSHS, Spokane.

²Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Hearings Before the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 11964, 67th Congress., 4th sess., 1923, 29.

interference problems for the industry. Stations often operated on the same wavelength at the same time resulting in an unintelligible whistle or static. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover then began to refuse new licenses to those who wished to broadcast in areas already inundated with radio signals. As a result of Hoover's decision Intercity Radio Company filed a lawsuit which gained a favorable decision from a Court of Appeals. The court abrogated the secretary's power to withhold licenses which he had assumed under the Radio Act of 1912.³ In its place, the Commerce Department developed a classification and zoning system to organize the burgeoning business of radio.⁴

Radio station operators and other interested parties, concerned that a plethora of new stations would obviate their investments, had met at the invitation of Secretary Hoover in the spring of 1922 to discuss radio's problems. The conferees came to the conclusion the only remedy to their predicament lay in the federal regulation of radio. Thus, radio businessmen found themselves in the unusual position of imploring the federal government to regulate their industry.⁵ And Clarence Dill soon found himself leading the fight in the Senate for legislation which would regulate radio, though Dill's idea of appropriate legislation differed substantially from that of radio's businessmen.

The meeting in the spring of 1922 came to be known as the First National Radio Conference. The conference went so far as to propose legislation to Congress which became H.R. 11964, 67th Congress. Wallace H. White, Republican congressman of Maine, had attended the conference and sponsored the

³Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 7.

⁴Ibid., 8.

⁵Ibid., 9-10.

legislation; he was the leading figure on the House side in the effort to pass radio legislation.⁶

The radio bill was referred to the committee on The Merchant Marine and Fisheries which eventually held hearings and reported out on 16 January 1923. In essence, the committee, due to the rapid changes in technology then taking place in radio, recommended that any forthcoming legislation refrain from attempting to be highly specific, preferring instead to grant broad powers to the Secretary of Commerce who presumably could respond to the changing needs of radio.⁷ Joel Rosenbloom notes that, "Most of the basic provisions of the Radio Act of 1927 take their origin in this bill, and that it placed the issuance of licenses in the absolute discretion of the secretary of commerce."⁸

White's bill received little attention in 1923 but was reintroduced in early 1924 as H.R. 7357. Meanwhile, a Senate bill addressing the growing fear of monopoly in radio was introduced. Many individuals were increasingly concerned private radio corporations would lay claim to ownership of "the ether." Indeed, it was a long established principle of American law, as Clarence Dill later wrote, "that if a citizen openly and adversely possesses and uses property for a long period of time without opposition, or without contest, he acquires title by adverse possession."⁹ Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover was among those who

⁶Congress, House, Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Hearings Before the Committee on The Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 11964, 67th Congress, 4th sess., 1923, 29. As quoted in Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 10.

⁷Ibid., 11.

⁸Ibid.

⁹C. C. Dill, Radio Law (Washington, D.C.: National Law Book Company, 1938), 78.

preferred the airwaves remain in the hands of private business.¹⁰ Thus it was with some irony that Hoover found himself opposing Charles Evans Hughes when Hughes argued for the doctrine of adverse possession on behalf of the General Electric Company before the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia.¹¹ Be that as it may, a sense of urgency thus arose regarding radio legislation which impelled Congress to act before sufficient time had elapsed during which the courts might find rights of ownership of the airwaves had been established among private users. In fact, one of the criticisms of the 1923 version of White's bill rested upon the belief it was too weak in regard to monopoly. The issue was a hot one. The hearings on H.R. 7357 were full of accusations and innuendo.¹²

In the spring of 1924 the Senate passed its bill regarding monopoly, the House combined it with its own and reported it out. Now Hoover unexpectedly withdrew his support from the combined bills, explaining rapid developments in technology (especially more powerful radio stations) and the arrival of the entirely new problem of radio advertising (potentially enormous profits) caused him to recommend a delay of one year; in the meantime he advocated creation of legislation directly - rather than broadly - regulating radio.¹³

While the legislation was on hiatus, Hoover hoped technology would solve

¹⁰Congress, House, Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Hearings Before The Committee on the Merchant Marine And Fisheries H.R. 11964, 4th sess., January 1923. As Quoted in Rosenbloom, "Authority of The Federal Communications Commission," 12.

¹¹Ibid., 79.

¹²Congress, House, Committee on The Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Hearings Before The Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 7357, 68th Congress, 1st sess., March 11,12,13,14, 1924. 40-51, 52-63, 70-98, 157-207.

¹³Congressional Record, (16 February 1924), vol. 65, pt.3, 2572-2573.

some of radio's problems, rather than create more. He was of the opinion new developments would make possible the elimination of interference between stations operating at the same frequency, and thus the concerns about monopoly would be mitigated.¹⁴ By late 1925, however, Hoover's optimism had faded: the problems of interference persisted, and a dramatic increase in license applications promised nothing but a continuation of radio's quandary.¹⁵ Hoover came to the conclusion Congress must pass legislation which would deprive individuals of the freedom to erect radio transmitters. In a speech before the Fourth National Radio Conference, he argued the rights of listeners preempted the rights of broadcasters:

We hear a great deal about the freedom of the air; but there are two parties to freedom of the air, and to freedom of speech for that matter. There is the speech maker and the listener. Certainly in radio I believe in freedom for the listener. He has much less option upon what he can reject, for the other fellow is occupying his receiving set. The listener's only option is to abandon his right to use his receiver. Freedom cannot mean a license to every person or corporation who wishes to broadcast his name or his wares, and thus monopolizes the listener's set.¹⁶

White's new legislation now encompassed the idea that the government would limit the number of stations and decline to issue licenses to some petitioners on the grounds that "the public interest" required that only a limited number of stations be in operation (the interference problem). The bill essentially followed

¹⁴Congress, House, The Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 5589, 69th Congress, 1st sess., 37, January 6-7, 14-15, 1926.

¹⁵Congress, Senate, Committee on Interstate Commerce, Hearings Before the Committee on Interstate Commerce on S.1 and S.1754, 69th Congress, 1st sess., January 8-9, 1926. 37, 216-283.

¹⁶Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 16.

the advice of the conferees at the Fourth National Radio Conference.¹⁷ The new bill passed the House on 15 March 1926, and was forwarded to the Senate where Dill's bill, which also sought to regulate radio, was still before the Commerce Committee.¹⁸

Dill had come to his leading role in radio legislation quite by accident. At the same time agitation for radio regulation was growing, there was also trouble between broadcasters and composers. Composers were often not paid for the reproduction of their works over radio. Some non-profit broadcasters in the Pacific Northwest informed Dill that ASCAP (American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers) was suing them for failure to pay royalties. Dill agreed to sponsor a bill which would exempt non-profit broadcasters from royalty payments. No sooner had the bill been announced than Dill found himself confronted by John Philip Sousa and a group of musicians who argued he was taking away their livelihood. The subsequent squabble over copyright law in radio made Dill the most knowledgeable radio man in the Senate in the mid-nineteen twenties. Consequently, he was the logical choice to handle comprehensive radio legislation.¹⁹

In March of 1926 both the Dill legislation and the White bill called for wide powers to be placed in the hands of the secretary of commerce, but differed as to the composition of the advisory radio commission.²⁰ If Dill's legislation had not undergone fairly rapid metamorphosis, radio legislation probably would have been

¹⁷Ibid., 17. New York Times, 20 December 1925, sec. 8, 18.

¹⁸Ibid., 9 January 1926, 11.

¹⁹Dill, Where Water Falls, 106-108.

²⁰New York Times, 10 January 1926, sec. 8, n.p.

passed in 1926. But shortly after Dill introduced his bill, Senator William Borah of Idaho (R) introduced a bill which sought to establish an independent commission to govern radio, thus taking control of radio out of the Commerce Department. As students of Herbert Hoover are aware, the secretary went to great pains to expand his domain and was averse to seeing it shrink.²¹ For his part, Borah was not overly concerned with the size of Hoover's kingdom, he convinced Dill to support the independent commission idea. Dill resubmitted his bill, changing it in accord with Borah's original concept.²² The new bill addressed a number of concerns. Framers of the legislation believed it would prevent monopoly, control chain broadcasting, regulate the selling prices of radio equipment, and provide a mechanism for denying licenses.

Radio legislation became even more imperative when the United States lost its case against Zenith Radio Corporation in April of 1926. In this case, the court ruled a licensee using an unauthorized wavelength at disallowed time could not be prosecuted under the Radio Act of 1912. This decision effectively meant there were no laws regarding radio broadcasting.²³

²¹David Burner, Herbert Hoover: A Public Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 161, 169, 183, 184.

²²New York Times, 2 May 1926, sec. 9, 21. From 16 September 1925 when Dill spoke at a radio banquet at the Hotel Commodore in New York City to January of 1926, Dill's views concerning radio regulation underwent a phenomenal transformation. In his New York Speech, Dill lauded the freedom American inventors and businessmen enjoyed; moreover, he specifically warned against establishing a commission to regulate radio. The crisis in broadcasting - which was even then acute - combined with the opinions of men he respected, such as George Norris and William Borah eventually brought him to support of the independent commission idea.

²³Ibid. Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 18.

On 7 May 1926 the Interstate Commerce Committee reported the Dill legislation with its creation of a independent commission. The Washingtonian was expected to call it to the floor forthwith. He elaborated on why the Senate preferred the commission system:

After the consideration of the facts given your committee at the hearings, the committee decided that the importance of radio and particularly the probable influence it will develop to be in the social, political, and economic life of the American people, and the many new and complex problems its administration presents, demand that Congress establish an entirely independent body to take charge of the regulation of radio communication in all its forms.

The exercise of this power is fraught with such great possibilities that it should not be entrusted to any one man nor to any administration department of the government. This regulatory power should be as free from political influence or arbitrary control as possible.²⁴

Six days later, Dill, nervous about the ramifications of the Zenith Case, pleaded with his colleagues to take-up his radio legislation, especially in view of the fact it differed widely with White's bill. He chafed at the fact that precious time slipped away in a bootless discussion over migratory birds.²⁵

Meanwhile, Dill's radio bill drew fire from conservatives. Herbert Houston, publisher and former President of the Advertising Clubs of the World, attacked it. Houston argued that under the Dill bill, control of radio would pass from the public (private enterprise) to the politician and propagandist.²⁶ While there were extreme conservatives who wanted no government regulation of radio, the majority on the right were perfectly willing to trust Secretary Hoover with the new medium. These people appeared to be moderate in their views and appealed

²⁴New York Times, 9 May 1926, 14.

²⁵Congressional Record, (13 May 1926), vol. 67, pt. 9.

²⁶New York Times, 13 May 1926, 2.

to a significant number of Americans. Professor Michael Pupin, of Columbia University, was representative of this group. In a speech before the Radio Club of America he attacked Dill's legislation and supported placing radio under the secretary of commerce. As we have seen, the senator himself, as recently as 1925, had been willing to give the secretary broad powers.²⁷

Dill, of course, had supporters from the left who argued his plan would provide a truly free medium and that it would be especially free from government control under an independent commission. Norman Thomas, Executive Director of the League for Industrial Democracy, wrote Dill a letter supporting the senator's efforts. In his letter, Thomas argued a "radio trust" existed under the secretary of commerce and exercised a virtual censorship over political ideas:

There isn't one of you who has ever heard a really uncensored program . . . I don't mean that a lot of foxed faced men sit around the table blue penciling everybody's speech. I do mean that in the nature of the case you hear carefully controlled and censored presentation of public problems . . . labor organizations, particularly the AFL, somehow or other have a terrible time getting a license of their own.²⁸

Thomas had intended to make his case over radio station WMCA, but the speech was suddenly canceled. In explaining the refusal to let Thomas broadcast, Donald Flamm of WMCA said, "Why he slammed the daylights out of the companies on which we depend for supplies." Thomas' solution was to support Dill's independent commission, and to keep radio as far away from government control (meaning Hoover and other conservatives) as possible.²⁹ Dill and Thomas believed that an independent commission whose members would be appointed by

²⁷Ibid., 14 May 1926, 31.

²⁸Ibid., 18 May 1926, 42.

²⁹Ibid.

the President and approved by the Senate would be less politically motivated than a commission under the control of the secretary of commerce.

Pressure on the Senate to pass radio legislation was building in the summer of 1926. Several senators spoke with Dill before his legislation came to the floor and urged him to yield and throw his support behind White. They argued they had received new telegrams from constituents pleading for action on radio. Interference had become such a problem many radios were useless.³⁰ By late 1926, there were over 600 stations in operation with seventy more under construction.³¹ In addition, two court decisions had disrupted the radio industry and threatened to yield a boom in new station construction. And as noted above the Zenith decision had denied the secretary of commerce the authority to regulate radio.³² Applications for radio licenses now skyrocketed as Hoover had no authority to deny those who applied for them. Everyone wanted to get in on the radio bonanza, for commercially, in spite of its problems, radio had arrived. Radios, and everything associated with them, tubes, how-to books, and components, became the rage for the Christmas season of 1926.³³

The activities of radio's boosters in late 1926 demonstrated how important radio had become to the American people. Radio entrepreneurs anticipated the Christmas season in that year. In September they held a Radio World's Fair at Madison Square Garden designed to excite the public over radio innovations and

³⁰Congressional Record (23 June 1926), vol. 67, pt. 11.

³¹W. Jefferson Davis, Radio Law, (New York: Parker Stone and Baird, 1929), 31.

³²Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 18.

³³New York Times, 12 December 1926, sec. 9, 16.

possibilities.³⁴ Even before the events of the fall of 1926, substantial pressure on the Senate to pass legislation existed. To that end, senators resumed deliberation on Dill's radio bill on 30 June 1926. Dill explained the purpose of his bill:

First, and most important of all, radio in the United States is free. It is so free to the listener-in that anybody anywhere may listen in to any broadcasting whatsoever, whether it be by amateurs who are experimenting or by telegraphers who are sending wireless messages in code or by broadcasters who are giving programs to amuse, entertain, and instruct, without any restraint or hindrance whatsoever by the Government.

This freedom of radio reception by the American people is the feature of radio that distinguishes and differentiates radio conditions in the United States from radio conditions in every other country in the world. In practically every other country the government levies a tax on receiving sets. In some countries the government has prevented listeners-in from having sets that will receive broadcasting on more than two or three wave lengths.

The other condition regarding radio in the United States that is different from conditions in foreign countries relates to broadcasting. In practically all other countries the government either owns or directly controls all broadcasting stations. In this country there has been practically no control exercised by the Government, except as to the assignment of wave lengths and regulations as to the amount of power to be used.

What has been the result of this policy of freedom for radio broadcasting and radio reception? The result is that American initiative and American business ingenuity have developed radio broadcasting in the United States far beyond anything known in other parts of the world. With only 6 per cent of the world's population living in the United States, we have more than 80 per cent of all the receiving sets on earth and five times as many broadcasting stations as all the rest of the world combined.

Let me add that not only are radio reception and radio broadcasting free from Government restraint in the United States, but it is our desire and purpose to keep them free so far as it is possible to do so in conformity with the general public interest and the social welfare of the great masses of our people. It is this combination of conditions and purpose that complicates the problem of legislation on this subject and compels Congress to pioneer the way in the passage of a radio bill. We must steer the legislative ship between the Scylla of too much regulation and the

³⁴Ibid., sec. 11, 2.

Charbydis of the grasping selfishness of private monopoly.³⁵

The Charbydis of the right, however, was formidable. Senator Bingham of Connecticut spoke against Dill's bill as calling for too many rules and regulations and highly paid commissions. He had amended to his remarks in the Congressional Record, an editorial from the Torrington Register of Monday 24 May 1926. The editorial writer preferred the White bill as the "least objectionable plan." Such were the sentiments of many in an era in which the American economic system seemed to be on the threshold of providing undreamed of luxuries to the common man.³⁶

The conferees were unable to reconcile their differences. Dill reported to the Senate on 3 July 1926 their failure to reach a compromise.³⁷ In lieu of comprehensive legislation, the conferees recommended S.J. 125, which would preserve the status quo (so threatened in the Zenith case of April) especially as it pertained to monopoly and ownership of the airwaves. Unfortunately, though S. J. 125 passed both branches of Congress, it was too late in the session to present the bill to the President. It was not signed until December 1926.

Dill attended the Radio World's Fair at Madison Square Garden in September. At the fair's radio banquet he espoused the belief that the self-interest of broadcasters would prevent total chaos in their industry. His statement of faith in the entrepreneurs was no doubt more an appeal than a reflection of his confidence in businessmen. Dill also predicted Congress would pass radio legislation in December. His faith in Congress and in the radio magnates was

³⁵Congressional Record (30 June 1926), vol. 67, pt. 11.

³⁶Ibid., (1 July 1926), vol. 67, pt. 11.

³⁷Ibid., (3 July 1926), vol. 67, pt. 11.

misplaced.³⁸ When Congress took up radio again in December, Dill's insistence on an independent commission, and White's insistence on an advisory commission, blocked compromise.³⁹

Dill's support among the conferees came in part from Republican Senator James Watson of Indiana and Representative Ewin L. Davis of Tennessee (D). Davis believed the White concept of an advisory commission was "spineless." He further argued radio was significant enough to warrant full-time attention from a professional commission. Meanwhile, Dill fought stop-gap measures, as they would take pressure off the main legislation and possibly result in delay.⁴⁰

On 8 January 1927, Dill reported to the Senate his belief a compromise with the House had been reached. He was not in error but was perhaps premature in announcing the agreement. Over the next few days, senators asked him as to the status of the accord. Dill was forced to admit the intensity of the struggle over the independent commission in negotiations with the Republicans - especially those from the House. He also had to correct inaccurate leaks as to the nature of the compromise, leaks which implied the Republicans had been victorious.⁴¹

Many senators and representatives grew restless waiting for the conferees

³⁸New York Times, 15 September 1926, 33. Congressional Record (12 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 2.

³⁹New York Times, 12 December 1926, sec. 9, 21.

⁴⁰Ibid., 12 December 1926, sec. 9, 21. Donald Godfrey, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Congressional Debates on Broadcast Regulation in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1975), 103. Godfrey argues that Dill was the sole spokesman in the effort to educate the public as to the merits of an independent commission. In this assertion, Godfrey has overlooked Davis' role in this effort.

⁴¹Congressional Record (12 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 2. Ibid., (15 January 1927), vol. 68, pt. 2.

to conclude business. Their mailboxes were inundated with petitions demanding Congress fix radio before adjourning on 4 March 1927. Dill calmly responded that the agreed on legislation would certainly beat that deadline.⁴² He released to the New York Times information which indicated over 1200 stations would be on the air by July 1927. He also informed the Times he hoped the Senate would take-up his bill after it disposed of the Branch Banking bill. In this news release, of course, Dill provided ammunition for petitioners should they chose to write their Congressman, thus placing a little pressure on his colleagues.⁴³

To this point Congress had felt a great deal of pressure to not only legislate in regard to radio, but to legislate in a manner acceptable to radio's businessmen. That pressure had generally manifested itself as support for returning radio to the secretary of commerce's control. With the agreement amongst the conferees, pressure on radio legislation came from a new direction. While some members of the business community opposed any legislation, most realized the necessity for it. They were also aware of the political realities in the Senate which made some form of compromise necessary if legislation were to be passed. Once that compromise was reached in the conference committee, conservatives supported the conference report and opposition from that source lessened.

Those who feared that radio's big businessmen might monopolize radio, however, were yet to be heard. This opposition to the conference report in the Senate now came generally from the progressive element of the upper house. Successfully maneuvering between the demands of the radio's business interests and the opposition of the those concerned for public ownership of the ether would

⁴²New York Times, 16 January 1927, sec. 7, 16.

⁴³Ibid., 13 February 1927, 17.

require all of the estimable conciliatory talents of Clarence Dill and more. Fortunately, Washington's junior senator possessed others talents as well. The New York Times described him as a "distinguished speaker who avoided extravagant gestures and had a brightly intelligent if not deeply intellectual mind."⁴⁴ One can safely add to that description the virtue of patience. Dill, over the next few weeks, may well have remembered the words of Shakespeare in Richard III, "I must have patience to endure the load."

On 3 February 1927, Dill finally presented the conference report to the Senate. He did not waste much time getting to the heart of the controversy: the nature of the proposed commission. In conference, Dill had won in his effort to make the commission independent and the supreme authority - other than the courts - over radio, but the Republicans had forced him to compromise; he agreed to limit the life of the independent commission to one year, during which it was believed most of radio's problems would be solved. At the end of that year, the commission was to become an advisory body to the secretary of commerce (White's plan). In agreeing to this compromise Dill was shrewd. Calvin Coolidge recognized, as did Dill, that once a commission is established in Washington, D.C. it almost never dies. On one occasion Coolidge remarked to Dill in regard to radio legislation, "I think you bested him [White]."⁴⁵

But the radio bill was a long way from arriving on Coolidge's desk. Opposition to the Dill bill, especially from those fearing a private enterprise monopoly of radio, formed under the leadership of Senator Key Pittman of Nevada

⁴⁴Donald Godfrey, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Congressional Debates on Broadcast Regulation in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1975), 43.

⁴⁵Ibid., 259.

(D). Dill knew the Nevada senator was concerned with vested rights to the air accruing to private enterprise, and with the possibility of monopolies arising. In explaining his bill before the Senate, Dill addressed that issue before Pittman even had a chance to bring it up. Dill quoted page ten of the bill:

No station license shall be granted by the commission or the Secretary of Commerce until the applicant thereof shall have signed a waiver of any claim to the use of any particular frequency or wavelength or of the ether as against the regulatory power of the United States because of the previous use of the same, whether by license or otherwise.⁴⁶

Now others opposed to the radio bill entered the fray. Senator Howell immediately rose and argued the language of the bill provided for private ownership of the ether with government regulation thereof. In short, the establishment of vested rights. Dill's response challenged Howell's interpretation, but left questions in the minds of many senators as to who owned the air. It is easy to see why:

The government does not own the frequencies, as we call them, or the use of frequencies. It only possesses the right to regulate the apparatus, and that right is obtained from the provision of the Constitution which gives Congress the right to regulate interstate commerce.

The conferees thought that it was better to have a waiver that was sufficiently clear in its terms to shut off any claim as against the power of the United States to control stations and have that waiver constitutional, than to hold to a waiver of doubtful constitutionality, which would probably be overturned by the courts, and we would have no waiver whatever in existence.⁴⁷

Senator Norris, unafraid to admit confusion, asked Dill, "Does the senator concede the accuracy of the statement made by my colleague that under this conference bill vested rights could be acquired?" Dill replied emphatically, "I do not." To which Norris quite reasonably replied, "I wish the senator would make that plain." Dill

⁴⁶Congressional Record, (3 February 1927), vol. 68, pt.3.

⁴⁷Ibid., 2870.

proceeded to do so:

We have three provisions, if I may summarize for the Senior senator from Nebraska. We have the provision first that no license shall be construed to give the licensees any rights not given in the license. We have the provision that makes them sign a waiver that they do not claim any right to use the ether or any wavelength as against the regulatory power. We have a provision that the license must state on its face that the licensee secures no rights beyond the time for which the license is granted.⁴⁸

Dill was attempting to explain that rights to the airwaves remained generally in private hands, but no specific individual or corporation owned those rights. The government bestowed them for a limited time on those who applied for a license according to law.

Senator Borah then pressed Dill as to the intent of the conferees. He asked whether or not it was the purpose of this bill to "deny the right to acquire a vested right in the ether." Dill responded, "That is the belief of the conferees . . . That was the intent."⁴⁹

Still, senators were not satisfied, the discussion which ensued took the better part of the day and was almost entirely devoted to the issue of vested rights and related matters. Essentially, senators Howell, Pittman, Norris, and several others wanted the language of the original Senate version of the bill restored. That language had clearly placed ownership of the airwaves in the United States government, but it also appeared, at least to the conferees, to give the government confiscatory rights outside of due process, should the licensee be found in violation of the agreement.⁵⁰ Howell and Heflin now pressed Dill as to why restoration of

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 2870-2873.

⁵⁰Ibid., Ibid., 2873.

the Senate's language was not possible. A look at the two clauses is instructive as to why they were concerned. The original Senate version, immediately below, vests ownership of the ether in the United States government but may have Constitutional ramifications:

A waiver of any right or of any claim to any right, as against the United States, to any wavelength or to the use of the ether in radio transmission because of previous license to use the same or because of the use thereof.

The language of the conferees claims only regulatory power of the airwaves for the government:

A waiver of any claim to the use of any particular frequency or wavelength or of the ether as against the regulatory power of the United States.⁵¹

Dill responded as to why the conferees had dropped the Senate's original language, "because we could not get it back in conference and we accepted language that means the same thing."⁵² Dill's argument was that the right of ownership was essentially irrelevant as long as the government had the power to regulate and ownership did not fall to specific individuals or corporations. As we shall see, other language in the bill guarded against the latter. It is also important to note the obstinance this issue engendered amongst the conservatives on the conference committee.

On the left, senators Howell and Heflin, unsatisfied with Dill's defense of the bill, attempted to derail it by raising a point of order. They argued the clause of the conference report repealing the radio bill passed in December was not in the original House or Senate bill. Therefore, including that clause in the conference report exceeded the authority of the conferees. The same point of order was

⁵¹Ibid., 2873.

⁵²Ibid., 2882.

raised in the House. Opposition to Dill's bill from those fearing the creation of vested interests was intense, even if that opposition did not constitute a majority.⁵³ The chairman of the Senate overruled the point of order. Howell protested on another similar point of order and was again overruled.⁵⁴

The Senate then moved on to another aspect of possible radio monopoly: chain broadcasting. Dill believed his bill provided sufficient power, under the public interest clause, to prevent monopoly. He further argued it instructed the commission to do so, but it was not intended to eradicate chain broadcasters.⁵⁵

Two days later, February 5, the Senate returned to the radio bill. Again the opposition came from those concerned with monopoly. Senator Pittman took-up the charge, citing Representative Davis' chagrin with the form of the radio bill as it had come out of conference. Davis had been a supporter of Dill's original Senate version. Pittman resumed the attack on the legislation's weakness regarding ownership of the air.⁵⁶ Moreover, he pleaded for more time to study the radio bill, causing Clarence to respond that the situation in radio did not allow for more time.⁵⁷

Having attacked Dill's legislation on the monopoly issue, Pittman now turned to assail the bill on what had to be a sensitive point for Clarence: the one-year limitation on the independent commission. Dill was forced to agree with his opponent that he preferred a permanent independent commission but could not get

⁵³Ibid., 2877.

⁵⁴Ibid., 2878.

⁵⁵Ibid., 2880-2881.

⁵⁶Ibid., (5 February 1927), 3026.

⁵⁷Ibid., 3027.

the White forces to agree.⁵⁸ He then described the opposition amongst the conferees to a permanent independent commission as "strenuous." As we have seen, Dill was a shrewd judge of political realities. He fought hard and delivered all there was to deliver to his colleagues. He held out the hope that perhaps the Senate could get more of what it wanted in the future. Yet Pittman persisted. He argued there was no way the bill could be amended in the future, it had to be done right the first time, especially concerning the permanence of the commission. Senator Kenneth McKellar, a Tennessee Democrat, then asked a question which allowed Dill to explain his motivation in agreeing to the compromise. McKellar queried the *Washingtonian*, "I will put it in a different way. Is the Radio Corporation of America satisfied with the bill?" Dill responded:

The Radio Corporation, through its president, said it does not want any legislation on radio. I want to say, further, that if those who oppose the conference report have their way, the Radio Corporation of America will win because there would be no legislation.⁵⁹

The discussion then rambled over lesser matters such as distribution of stations and new technology which might be used to force listeners to pay for broadcasts. Dill responded, again, that the commissioner's instruction to regulate in the "public interest" would cover these problems.⁶⁰

Pittman now raised the issue of equal access to radio by those campaigning for public office. He argued the Dill legislation would allow for one candidate to gain a distinct advantage over another. Dill did not agree:

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, *Ibid.*, 3028.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 3030. Dill's vision of the future proved both more optimistic and more accurate than Pittman's. The radio law was amended on several occasions.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 3033.

because under this bill, if they permit one candidate to use the facilities, they immediately become liable to give equal opportunity to the other candidate, and the commission would immediately protect the candidate who was discriminated against.⁶¹

Pittman's objection to the protection afforded political candidates in the conferees' radio bill no doubt stemmed from the fact that originally language which would have made radio stations subject to common carrier status was included. The objection, however, to the common carrier provisions - which would have required radio stations to accept any political message so long as it was paid for - was so great the wording was withdrawn. Among those complaining about the common carrier provision were W. G. Cowles, Vice President of Broadcasting with Traveler's Insurance Company. Cowles attacked the common carrier doctrine, arguing it would create a situation in which there would be "no end to such broadcasts." He further argued that such a clause would require stations to broadcast the opinions of cranks and even Bolshevists. Cowles agreed airing opposing viewpoints was necessary, but asked that stations retain the right to refuse access to individuals.⁶² Senator Howell was not happy about Dill's capitulation to the right. He argued the new language raised the possibility radio might not adequately provide air time for public issues. Dill responded that Howell's solution would recreate the common carrier problem, and argued the Senate ought to pass the legislation and give it time to work.⁶³

Pittman was unimpressed and continued his harangue over potential discrimination between political candidates. The discussion had been raging - and

⁶¹Ibid., 3034.

⁶²Godfrey, "A Rhetorical Analysis," 91-93.

⁶³Ibid., 94.

in some instances wallowing - for a week. The House had already passed the conference report.⁶⁴ On February 7 the Senate again considered Dill's radio legislation. Pittman now tried to defeat the conference report by sending it back to the conferees with instructions to strengthen the language regarding vested rights.⁶⁵ In his argument he castigated the Dill bill as being a tool of RCA. Apparently Pittman was not listening when Dill explained the differences between the desires of RCA and the legislation before the Senate.

Senator Joseph Robinson (D) of Arkansas now asked Dill what position he would be in among the conferees should the Senate vote to recommit the radio legislation. Dill responded, "It would put me in the position of going back and fighting for what I fought for before and failed to get."⁶⁶ Pittman's motion to recommit the conferees report lost, 48 to 29. Dill pressed for a vote adopting the conference report, but senator Howell objected, and by prior arrangement the Senate moved on to farm relief (the fact that farm relief discussion followed closely upon the heels of radio on this particular day demonstrates how difficult it would have been for Dill to be heavily involved in both issues).

The upper house resumed discussion of radio legislation the next day. Senator David Walsh (D) of Massachusetts argued for passage of the bill as the lesser of two evils.⁶⁷ The day's further discussion of the bill did give Dill the opportunity to clarify the role of the commission after the first year expired:

I cannot allow to pass unnoticed his [senator Walsh's] statement that after

⁶⁴Congressional Record (5 February 1927), vol. 68, pt. 3.

⁶⁵Ibid., (7 February 1927), vol. 68, pt. 3, 3118.

⁶⁶Ibid., 3122.

⁶⁷Ibid., (8 February 1927), 3257.

one year the commission becomes merely an appellate body. I do not believe that the terms of the bill justify that view. In the first place, the commission retains at all times the power of revocation of licenses. That is never transferred to the Secretary of Commerce. In many ways that is the most important power aside from the power of granting the licenses. The Secretary of Commerce has no power under the legislation, even after the first year, except as there is no objection on the part of anyone.⁶⁸

senators Pittman and Walsh then lamented the fact Dill had been unable to gain from the House conferees a permanent commission. Dill responded, revealing his strategy all along, with the hope the work of the commission would be so intricate as to require meeting indefinitely.⁶⁹

Pittman and his associates would not give up. The Nevada senator raised a point of order similar to the one previously defeated but was again rebuked. Undaunted, he appealed the decision of the chair and lost again.⁷⁰ He now considered organizing a filibuster but ultimately thought better of it.⁷¹

On 18 February 1927 the radio bill came before the Senate one more time. Nothing Dill said in the preceding weeks had changed Pittman's mind. However, the Nevadan had been successful in drawing away some of Dill's supporters. Nearly all of the progressive senators now opposed the conferees report. Aware a vote was imminent, Pittman took one last opportunity to attack the bill, reeling off a long list of objections. Finally, Dill broke in seeking to correct misstatements and stating the whole purpose of the bill was to provide a public service. Pittman briefly lost his composure, responding, "Mr. President, that statement from the

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 3258.

⁷⁰Ibid., 3262. Ibid., (9 February 1927), 3336.

⁷¹Ibid., (12 February 1927), vol. 68, pt. 4.

senator of Washington would be as absurd as this bill if the bill were not tragic."⁷² Then, as if sorry for his outburst, he complimented the senator from Washington for his honesty and seriousness in championing his bill.⁷³

Dill listened patiently to the various senators repeat their arguments as to why they opposed his legislation; he even had to listen to a few supporters deride the bill. Senator Royal Copeland of New York (D), who intended to vote for the conferees report, lamented its shortcomings and had wanted to delay it in order to improve it.⁷⁴ Finally, Dill rose in his own defense and argued that the bill, while not perfect, was good legislation.⁷⁵

Senator Coleman Blease, a Democrat from South Carolina, was the last to speak and in so doing suggested a concern which no doubt occupied the minds of a number of his colleagues, though his immediate concerns were probably his alone:

Personally, I do not want it. I do not want to talk to anybody I cannot see. If I talk to an audience, I want to look at them and I want them to see me . . . I do not want machine fixed here [broadcasting the proceedings of the Senate was under consideration as well] for the purposes of a select few, and that is all that this bill means.⁷⁶

Senator Blease's comments aptly demonstrate the conflict between past and present very much involved in this legislation. There were, of course, the old issues of private property versus public interest and they were dominant. But

⁷²Ibid., (18 February 1927), 4111.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Godfrey, "A Rhetorical Analysis," 151.

⁷⁵Congressional Record, (18 February 1927), vol. 68, pt. 4, 4154.

⁷⁶Ibid., 4155.

many senator's concerns with the old familiar issues were exacerbated by their unfamiliarity with radio and their apprehension for what radio meant to the future. Regardless of the emotions prevalent within the chamber, it was clearly time to vote, no one was going to change opinions. The bill passed.⁷⁷

Dill believed the Senate had passed "reasonably safe legislation" which would provide the nation a "basic law to meet the present situation". He emphasized that the law withheld ownership of the ether from private interests and placed control of radio in a bi-partisan commission. Dill admitted the legislation was not perfect and would require amending as developments in broadcasting warranted. Nor was he naive about the crucial role in the development of broadcasting the commission would play:

In case the commission finds an applicant for a license or for the renewal of a license is guilty of practicing against the public interests the license may be refused. In other words, the success of the bill depends upon the devotion of the members of the commission to the public interest.⁷⁸

His opponents in the legislative process recognized his achievement, if later students did not; Robert Marriot, supported by the Radio Club of America for a position as one of the commissioners, said, "as a law it will be as good as we can expect."⁷⁹

Dill's warning about the composition and philosophy of the commission was prophetic. President Coolidge appointed three Republicans: Rear Admiral (ret.) William Bullard, Orestes H. Caldwell, and John F. Dillon, and two Democrats: Henry A. Bellows, and Eugene O. Sykes. Dill immediately let his

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸New York Times 20 February 1927, 17.

⁷⁹Ibid.

opposition to Caldwell, Dillon, and Bellows be known but to little avail. Coolidge, of course, eventually had his way and created a commission which favored the interests of private enterprise, much as the Interstate Commerce Commission did after the Coolidge appointees altered the nature of that board in 1925.⁸⁰ One might argue that on this issue, Coolidge bested Dill.

The conservatives in the House combined with the President were not content to shape the commission. They also denied it adequate funding. It was not long before Dill, and his allies in the House, sought suitable legislation to address some of the decisions of the commissioners, especially geographical distribution of stations.⁸¹ Clarence Dill was not through with radio; it would occupy a considerable amount of his time well into the future.

Dill's role in passing the Radio Act of 1927 has attracted considerable attention from scholars from various fields. One of them, Robert W. McChesney, argues:

If the public debate and the discussion among the concerned parties tended to concentrate on issues that seem tangential to the dominant trend toward a private commercial domination of the airwaves, the Congressional debate over the Radio Act of 1927 was even less significant.⁸²

Essentially McChesney believes Congress should have been discussing a public versus private radio system but failed to do so. He is correct in his opinion that the nation, and Congress, failed to engage in such a debate. But he doesn't seem to

⁸⁰Donald McCoy, Calvin Coolidge. 285-286. McCoy argues the ICC was more concerned with encouraging business than regulating it after 1925.

⁸¹Ibid., 2 October 1927, sec.,9, 27. Congressional Record (13 March 1928), vol. 69, pt. 4.

⁸²Robert McChesney, "President Franklin D. Roosevelt And The Communications Act Of 1934," American Journalism 5 (Dec., 1988): 3.

understand why he is correct. The reason lies in his unfamiliarity with the United States of the 1920's.

Failure to openly debate this issue was not due, as McChesney implies, to a lack of American awareness concerning it. It was because Americans had held the debate already in countless other forms, the role of government in the progressive era being only the most recent. Moreover, government-owned radio was perceived as being a foreign system. Dill himself stood in the Senate in 1924 and compared the rapid development of radio in America to the moribund European system.⁸³ Even had the Europeans been more dynamic with their system, it is unlikely that it would have changed the debate. By 1924, and on through the decade, Americans were dubious about anything from the old world: Europeans seemed to learn little from their wars and settle less; they also failed to pay their bills. American attitudes toward Europe, combined with the distinctive American psychology, made adoption of a European-style government-owned radio system unlikely. Wallace Stegner beautifully captures the American mind in Angle Of Repose:

One of the charming things about nineteenth century America was its cultural patriotism - not jingoism, just patriotism, the feeling that no matter how colorful, exotic, and cultivated other countries might be, there was no place so ultimately right, so morally sound, so in tune with the hopeful future, as the USA.⁸⁴

What was true of Americans in the nineteenth century was no less true in the America of the 1920's; it may have been more so. Thus the failure to consider a state-run radio system grew out of what the US was in the twenties and where it

⁸³New York Times, 4 March 1924, Congressional Record, vol. 65, pt. 4.

⁸⁴Wallace Stegner, Angle Of Repose (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc.), 319.

was going. McChesney's criticism of the path the nation took in regard to radio amounts to criticizing the people of the era for not being wholly other than they were and not perceiving clearly what path the development of radio would take in the future.

Moreover, he does not seem to recognize the strenuous efforts on the part of progressives to defeat Dill's radio bill, to reshape it along lines that were at least conceivably attainable in that day and age. Pittman and his colleagues argued vociferously for government ownership of the air and strict guidelines to the commission. To argue as McChesney does that the Senate debate did not touch on controversial issues or take radio seriously does not bare scrutiny, unless the only serious issue was public versus private ownership of radio. Certainly the progressives in the Senate believed important issues were at stake; by the end of the radio debate, every progressive senator had abandoned the conferees report except Dill, who alone fully understood what it had taken to get it as far as he had. The fact of the matter was that the majority of the nation's legislators were opposed to the commission and had only acquiesced in the face of public demand for regulation.⁸⁵ McChesney fails to recognize that those who were in favor of a government-owned system were waging the battle on grounds they thought winnable. George Norris clearly preferred a government-run radio system, but realized the hopelessness of that cause and thus fought Dill on other related issues.⁸⁶ In the end the progressives could not force change in any aspect of the radio bill. Government-owned and operated radio was never possible.

McChesney further argues that radio legislation was rushed through the

⁸⁵Godfrey, "A Rhetorical Analysis," 218. *Ibid.*, 246-247.

⁸⁶Lowitt. George Norris, 309.

Congress after a Federal Appeals Court had ruled in late 1926 that selective issuance of broadcast licenses was unconstitutional.⁸⁷ This argument again ignores the facts. Congress had been considering radio legislation since 1923. Moreover, Dill's own bill had been before the Senate for over a year when it was finally passed. And the court case which caused chaos in the industry and helped move legislation was decided in April of 1926, not late in the year.

Nor does it seem that McChesney can decide where to place the blame for the demise of non-profit broadcasters after 1927: the Radio Act of 1927, or the Federal Radio Commission. The fact is, Dill himself was quite unhappy with the work of the FRC by the end of the decade, as were many others, and led efforts to amend the radio law.

McChesney is no doubt right, however, in taking to task Donald Godfrey and Sydney Head, among others, for their view that the 1927 Radio Act was a progressive victory.⁸⁸ Unless language has lost all meaning the progressives lost the fight over radio in 1927. Dill gained all he could. In this debate McChesney sides with Philip Rosen and Erik Barnouw who are more critical of the Radio Act of 1927, if less knowledgeable concerning Dill's role and importance.⁸⁹

McChesney's argument that the 1927 Radio Act was not a progressive victory suggests a force which caused the progressive defeat. While the

⁸⁷McChesney, (FDR And The Communications Act Of 1934), 3.

⁸⁸Donald Godfrey, "senator Dill and the 1927 Radio Act," Journal of Broadcasting 23 (1978): 485. Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in America (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1956), 134.

⁸⁹Philip Rosen, The Modern Stentors: Radio Broadcasters and the Federal Government 1920-1934 (Westport Conn.:Greenwood Press, 1980). Erik Barnouw, A History of Broadcasting in the United States, (vol. 1), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

progressives did not argue for government-owned radio, they did go to great lengths to gain provisions in the radio bill they considered attainable, but were ultimately defeated. The victors were the conservatives, primarily in the House, who refused to compromise any further on radio legislation. In his work Godfrey slights the power of these representatives and emphasizes the divisions within the ranks of radio interests as contributing to the conferees compromise and the creation of progressive legislation. As we have seen, the Radio Act of 1927 cannot be characterized as progressive; Dill himself would not have used that word. The House conferees, especially White, fought tenaciously to emasculate the commission as much as possible and ultimately relied on President Coolidge to frustrate Dill's hopes for the commission, even to the denying of funds for the commission to operate.⁹⁰

Thus Both McChesney and Godfrey slight the role of politics in the Radio Act of 1927. Godfrey fails to see the hand of the conservative Republicans in shaping the legislation before it reached the Senate floor; McChesney ignores the battles progressives waged in fighting for government ownership of the air, and other concerns, because the argument did not take the form he preferred. However, McChesney's assessment of the legislation seems more accurate given the subsequent history of radio, but his identifying Dill with commercial interests is too vague.⁹¹ Dill was an unequivocal believer in the American free enterprise system, but he was a fervid advocate of government regulation to improve the lot of the common man. Moreover, he was unhappy with much of what the FRC did and sought to amend the Radio Act of 1927 on several occasions, as we will

⁹⁰New York Times, 2 October 1927, sec., 9, 15.

⁹¹Robert McChesney, Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle For the Control of US Broadcasting, 1928-1935 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 125-127.

eventually see.

Finally, McChesney does not ask the more important questions about Clarence Dill. He seems preoccupied with lamenting the course of radio in the late twenties and thirties, while ignoring the historical realities of the time and blaming much of what went wrong on Dill. There is little that can come from this sort of inquiry. McChesney would have been better advised to have asked where Dill intended to take radio, and why it didn't get there? The answer lies in the political and social milieu of the time, a time McChesney seems largely unfamiliar with.

As a result of his work on radio, Dill rose substantially in the eyes of his colleagues. Vice President Dawes even congratulated the still-young Democrat on his handling of the floor fight over radio.⁹² Radio's technical aspects caused many senators to defer to the acknowledged expert on the subject in the Senate, Clarence Dill. Moreover, he received notoriety in the press. Radio was of interest to nearly everyone, as was radio legislation. Dill's name appeared in the headlines often. For a first-term senator, he had made significant contributions to the country. He had also contributed to his state in a very unique manner: Robert Ficken and Charles Lewarne argue in Washington: A Centennial History: "The radio as much as anything drew Washington into the heart of national life."⁹³ Clarence Dill's work on radio legislation contributed to the unifying of the country, the linking of the East with the growing West, in a very meaningful way. The work he had done was also symbolic of the man: he had contributed to the building of a lasting institution.

⁹²Dill, Where Water Falls, 112.

⁹³Ficken and Lewarne, Washington: A Centennial History, 97.

TARIFFS AND TROUBLE

With the battle for the Radio Bill of 1927 behind him Clarence Dill turned his attention to other possibilities and problems. The primary possibility concerned the affections of a young lady known as Rosalie Jones; the problems generally focused on how to secure reelection in 1928. As it turned out Rosalie substantially aided Dill with the challenge of reelection, but the campaign forced the senator to make a promise concerning the nation's tariff he could not keep.

Shortly after Dill's radio legislation became law, he tried his hand at another institution. On 15 March 1927 Dill married Rosalie Gardner Jones of Long Island, New York. The senator first met his future wife in 1924 when she came to his office as a member of a women's peace movement delegation which was in Washington D.C. for a Jane Addams peace conference.¹ In recalling her first meeting with Clarence Dill she said, "The women wanted to ask him some important questions, ... He answered evasively and I raked him over the coals." Dill's obfuscations made her even more angry until she finally left his office in a huff, before they had even been introduced.² Apparently, however, he was as smitten with the New York fireball as she was with him. They both later described their emotions as "love at first sight."³ For two weeks Dill prodded his secretary to find out who the "lady in pink" was. Somehow the secretary's quest was accomplished, and Dill was further encouraged when Rosalie wrote him a note congratulating him on his role in the fight to save Muscle Shoals from private development.⁴ In the note she identified herself as a fellow progressive.⁵ It wasn't

¹New York Times, 9 March 1927, 27.

²Ibid., 31 March 1936, 14.

³Ibid.

⁴Muscle Shoals was a series of rapids on the Tennessee river in northwest Alabama. During W.W.I the US government developed the site, building a dam and two nitrate plants. After the war there was pressure on the federal government to sell the development to private enterprise. Henry Ford made an offer on the property but many believed the offer did not adequately compensate the government for its investment at Muscle Shoals or for the power potential of the site. Thus Dill and others such as George Norris preferred the government

long before friends arranged to have the two formally introduced.⁶

Rosalie Jones was a formidable woman. A native of Cold Spring Harbor, New York she was given the nickname "General Rosalie" in 1913 when she led a group of women suffragists, known as the Army of the Hudson, on a march to Albany New York. In Albany the marchers presented a petition to Governor-elect William Sulzer in an effort to remind him of his pledge to support their cause.⁷

Not content with campaigning for woman's suffrage in their home state, the army determined to march on Washington D.C. to confront Woodrow Wilson who had made himself a target of the suffragists through his refusal to pursue suffrage at the national level. As a true son of Virginia he believed the states should decide the issue for themselves.⁸ General Rosalie and her troops, like General Grant who had confronted another Virginian a half century before, hoped to persuade this one that his ideas were impotent in the face of their wrath.⁹ It took years but Wilson eventually saw the error of his ways, supported national woman's suffrage in 1916, and pushed for the constitutional amendment (19th) in 1918 which eventually became law in 1920.¹⁰

Rosalie did not confine her feminism to marches and upbraiding presidents. After the march on Washington D.C. she worked one summer as an apprentice auto mechanic in a Chevrolet dealership. She spent her spare time touring New York in a yellow Chevrolet, provided by the dealership, drumming for support of woman's suffrage.¹¹

develop Muscle Shoals. Lowitt, George W. Norris, 198-202.

⁵Seattle P.I., 30 June 1936, 2.

⁶New York Times, 31 March 1936, 14.

⁷Ibid., 9 March 1936, 27.

⁸Diggins, Pivotal Decades, 184.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 308.

¹¹New York Times, 9 March 1927, 27.

In addition to being forceful and determined she was intelligent and highly educated. She studied at both New York and Columbia universities and eventually earned five degrees. Among them were a law degree - she was a member of the New York bar - and a Ph.D. which she received at George Washington University. In 1922 she published a book on the legal status of women.¹²

Rosalie no doubt intimidated many of the men she came into contact with. But if her strength of mind and accomplishments sent most men running she had one other quality, besides her vivacious good looks, which brought them to her door. She was wealthy. Her father was Dr. Oliver Jones. The doctor apparently had invested heavily in real estate in New York and in other states as well. When he died he left his wife Mary most of the money. When Mary died in 1918 the estate was estimated at more than 5 million dollars. True to form, Rosalie managed the estate herself, including the real estate holdings, even after her marriage to Clarence Dill.¹³

Politically Rosalie found herself attracted to socialism and had voted the socialist ticket on two occasions.¹⁴ But as the twenties passed her politics moved back toward progressivism and the Democratic party.¹⁵ But her conservative upbringing began to reassert itself, especially after the Depression struck.¹⁶

Clarence Dill and Rosalie Jones were married in Cold Spring Harbor, New York on March 15, 1927. The ceremony took place in the St. John's Episcopal Church which her family had built about 1830. There were no invitations extended, but workers on the estates in the vicinity, friends in the area, even the postman, combined with a number of New York's high society - including a former secretary of the Navy and a former governor of New York - to overflow the church. The ceremony itself was unusual: Rosalie was not "given away," and her

¹²Ibid., 31 March 1936, 14. Ibid., 10 July 1936, 21.

¹³Ibid., 9 March 1927, 27. Ibid., 31 March 1936, 14.

¹⁴Ibid. Seattle P.I., 7 July 1936, 2.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 27 June 1936, 1, 3. Ibid., 30 June 1936, 1, 2.

vows reflected her feminism - the word "obey" was omitted. After the wedding the guests took a special train to the Gotham Hotel in New York where the new couple received their congratulations. For entertainment there was dancing and a buffet luncheon.¹⁷

The wedding received extensive coverage from the New York Times primarily because of the social status of the bride, but Clarence Dill was no longer an obscure politician from somewhere out west.¹⁸ His work on radio legislation had placed his name in the newspapers often. His marriage to Rosalie did nothing but help his public image along. Still, it would not be fair to Dill to suggest he didn't love his new wife; by all accounts he did. But neither should it come as a surprise that the woman he chose to love was capable of helping his career in a number of ways.

The Dills had been married but three days when Rosalie decided to help her husband financially. She proposed to give him one thousand dollars per month to help cover their household expenses. He agreed but asked that she deposit the money directly into their bank so that his name would never appear on the checks. Dill was self-conscious about taking money from his wife.¹⁹ As it turned out Rosalie contributed much more than the thousand dollars per month; she often paid bills that were tied to Dill's political campaigns or activities.²⁰

In 1931 the couple took a trip to Europe which Rosalie paid for.²¹ While in London she had the opportunity to be presented at the Court of St. James. She was very excited about the presentation but Clarence was opposed. He feared what his constituents back home in the mill towns and grasslands of Washington

¹⁷New York Times, 16 March 1927, 25.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Seattle P.I. 7 July 1936, 1. Ibid., 26 June 1936, 12. Ibid., 4 July 1936, 4.

²⁰Ibid., 2 July 1936, 1.

²¹Ibid., 26 June 1936, 12.

would think. He didn't attend the ceremony.²² Just as he feared, Dill did receive some criticism for allowing his wife to "curtsy to royalty," but the overwhelming response amongst the society women of Spokane was one of curiosity. Dill found himself writing to his wife instructing her to bring the dress she had worn at court with her to Spokane; he added, "the women are crazy to see it."²³

With his new wife at his side, Clarence Dill turned his attention in 1928 to securing his Senate seat for another six years. Ironically his relationship with his own party would prove to be one of the obstacles to his reelection, while his ability to appeal to progressive Republicans would prove to be a source of strength. In addition, he found a way to take advantage of a traditionally Republican issue: the tariff. The result of these anomalies was a Senate election which proved to be one of the closest and most interesting contests in Washington's political history.

The first major political event of the 1928 campaign was the state convention held in Spokane in April. Washington's Democratic party had coalesced behind Al Smith before the convention even met, making Clarence rather an outsider. The senator supported Smith's economic program but differed with the New Yorker over Prohibition. Dill believed Prohibition would play a major role in the 1928 campaign, if for no other reason than that Smith's anti-Prohibition stand would make it an issue. In spite of its commitment to Smith, the state convention - in deference to his stature as a United States senator - made Dill a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Houston with half a vote.²⁴

In an effort to send a united delegation to Houston, Lewis B. Schwellenbach, a former student of Dill's in his Spokane high school days and now active in King County Democratic politics, wrote a letter to Dill encouraging the senator to deny reports he was against Smith. Dill did not acquiesce in Schwellenbach's proposal. In fact the letter may have occasioned the first crack in

²²Ibid. Ibid., 30 June 1936, 2.

²³Ibid., 3 July 1936, 3.

²⁴Ibid., 12 April 1928, 1. Ibid., 13 April 1928, 1.

the friendship of the two men, a crack which would only widen.²⁵ Another factor which no doubt contributed to the rift was Schwellenbach's less progressive stance on public power. At the Spokane convention, which eventually passed the Unger plank committing the Democrats to the old Bone bill (which would have allowed cities with power plants to sell power outside their borders thus competing with private power), Schwellenbach supported a non-committal plank.²⁶

Whatever the source of the feud between Dill and Schwellenbach, the senator had his heart set on giving the key-note address at the Houston convention. He had worked for the honor for months; his highly visible radio work had only helped his cause. But the party's clear support of Smith derailed Dill's oratorical aspirations. The Democrats chose Claude G. Bowers, an editorial writer for the New York Evening World, a pro-Smith paper. Dill did not even go to the convention.²⁷

The senator's rift with the national Democratic party extended to the Washington state Democratic party as well. Scott Bullitt, a wet, eventually became the Democrat's gubernatorial nominee. Dill knew his state well; Washington was firmly in the dry column. To campaign as a wet Democrat was simply to commit political suicide. He decided to let the Smith\Bullitt forces have the state Democratic party; he regarded it as of little consequence anyway.²⁸

The broadcasting of the 1928 national conventions was a major event in the life of the nation. In celebration of the occasion the New York Times naturally asked the Senate's authority on radio for an opinion. Dill remarked:

Broadcasting of the national conventions is an excellent thing, and will give the public a chance to hear the actual speeches and proceedings. The conventions are the most remarkable political institutions in America

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid. 14 April 1928, 8.

²⁷Spokesman-Review, 30 April 1928, n.p.

²⁸New York Times, 28 October 1928, sec., 3, 2. Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 199-200. Seattle P-I, 27 June 1928, 3.

because they are without authority of law. The broadcasting of these events will bring the people of the country much nearer to the naming of the President.²⁹

Giving the public a chance to hear speeches was exactly what Dill proposed to do from July to November of 1928. He kicked off his reelection campaign in the Spokane area town of Hillyard, Washington. Even in the primary Dill's campaign was designed more to defeat whoever his Republican challenger would be than to defeat any Democrat foolish enough to run against him.³⁰

Early in the campaign he made clear his stance on Prohibition:

As to Governor Smith, I desire to say that I am opposed to his stand on the Volstead law, and if re-elected shall do everything in my power as a senator to prevent modification of that law, except to make it more stringent...What this country needs most is honest and lawful enforcement of the Prohibition law. In fighting to maintain Prohibition, I shall be carrying out the mandate of the people of this state, who have three times voted dry.

I favor Governor Smith's position on the water power question, the farm question and the labor question. If elected, he would sign legislation that would protect the people from the great power octopus that menaces the economic life of this country as nothing has done since we abolished slavery. He would sign a farm bill that would place the farmers on a basis of equality with other citizens. He would sign a bill to prevent the arbitrary use of court injunctions in labor disputes.

I was a progressive before I was elected to the senate. I have been a progressive on every fight and on every roll call since I went to the senate, and I shall be a progressive if I am reelected. In every contest between the rights of property and the rights of humanity, I am on the side of humanity.³¹

Dill was well aware that Smith's wet views would define the presidential campaign in the state of Washington, which had grown more dry as the decade

²⁹New York Times, 10 June 1928, sec. 9, 16.

³⁰Ibid., 20 July 1927, 27.

³¹Inland Empire News, 11 July 1928, 1.

passed. Thus Clarence could not afford to repeat his 1922 Prohibition strategy. He had to separate himself from Al Smith's wet stance and hope his Republican opponent was as dry as he was, thus relegating Prohibition to the back burner. Consequently, Dill set out to make unequivocally clear his opposition to any weakening of Prohibition.

There were other issues which required a carefully chosen position. Dill wanted to identify himself solidly with farm relief and did so more successfully than the provincialist from New York. He also sought to make an issue out of public power and supported Smith in that debate. While these were the primary issues on which he campaigned, the Democrat had not forgotten labor; he supported a bill, as did Smith, "to prevent the arbitrary use of court injunctions on labor disputes."³²

Dill easily won re-nomination in the primary, while Judge Kenneth McKintosh defeated Miles Poindexter in the Republican primary, earning the right to face the incumbent.³³ This time the race was a straight forward battle between two candidates; Dill's record had obviated the need for third parties to run a more liberal or progressive candidate. Dill and McKintosh battled head to head like two great stags in the midst of Washington's emerald forests.

Those forests became an issue in the 1928 campaign. The decade had not been as kind to lumber men as it had been to business in general. Entering the 1920's, Pacific Northwest lumber men hoped good times would continue. There

³²Ibid. Everett Daily Herald, 11 July 1928, 1. New York Times, 13 July 1928, 3.

³³Secretary of State. Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of Washington in the Primary Election, September 11, 1928 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

was optimism that shipments back East would increase. But the revival of Southern pine producers, combined with slumping postwar demand, squeezed the market. Fortunately, new products kept many companies viable. New technology for pulp made the production of paper a cornerstone of the Pacific Northwest economy in the twenties. Plywood also supported several mills, and exports to Japan helped offset losses in other markets. But there were so many new mills now in operation that even with the foregoing development times were tough in the lumber business.³⁴

Overproduction was the principal culprit. In spite of the fall in demand Washington's mills continued to pour out 7 billion board feet per year through the twenties. Prices fell accordingly. Douglas Fir plummeted from \$27.26 per thousand feet in 1923 to \$19.39 in 1928. Prominent lumber man George Long "compared the industry to 'a large army in disorganized retreat.'"³⁵ Indeed the retreat had begun as early as 1925.³⁶ In an effort to control prices some mill and logging companies attempted mergers, and there was much discussion of allocating production amongst the various producers, but long-standing disagreements between independent minded lumber men, combined with anti-trust problems should such price-fixing be attempted, blocked concerted action.³⁷ Consequently there was considerable demand from lumber men, who as a group were extremely powerful in Washington politics, for a protective tariff on both lumber and

³⁴Robert E. Ficken, The Forested Land (Seattle: University of Washington press, 1987), 168-180.

³⁵Ibid., 174.

³⁶John Fahey, The Inland Empire: The Unfolding Years (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 211.

³⁷Ficken, The Forested Land, 177.

shingles.³⁸

Dill had established a solid record in the Senate on issues which were of concern to lumber men. He favored Washington's timber interests on everything from control of pine blister rust to revising the tariff on shingles.³⁹ Dill explained his position on tariffs in general and the shingle tariff in particular on the floor of the Senate:

I do not believe in absolute free trade. Nor am I one of those who believe that simply because some industry wants tariff protection it should be granted such protection. I believe that if the tariff commission does its work as it was intended it should do, and Congress would follow its recommendations, we would then evolve a tariff which would equal the difference between the cost of production at home and the cost of production abroad. That should be our policy.

As was suggested by my colleague we formerly had a great shingle industry in the state of Washington, and when a tariff was put on logs and shingles left on the free list, immediately a premium was placed on oriental labor in Canada. Previous to the enactment of the last tariff law there was no tariff on either logs or shingles. Since the adoption of the discriminatory tariff on logs and the failure to place a tariff on shingles, 131 shingle mills in the state of Washington have been forced out of business, and approximately one-half of the shingle business has been destroyed, due to the discriminatory tariff against our own business. In addition to that Canada has an export duty on logs. So that the present tariff law not only interferes with the free intercourse of the lumber industry in the northwest, but it places a special discrimination against the shingle industry by putting a tariff upon logs [shingle mills had routinely bought Canadian logs].⁴⁰

³⁸Robert E. Ficken, Lumber and Politics: the Career of Mark E. Reed (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 165-181.

³⁹Letter from C. C. Dill to the Merrill and Ring Lumber Company, 23 January 1924, Merrill and Ring Lumber Company Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle. Pine Blister Rust is a disease which attacks Western White Pine and other pine varieties. It produces cankers on the trees, spreads through airborne spores which grow on the infected tree's needles and can kill trees so infected. Containment of the disease is labor intensive and thus expensive. Merrill and Ring were concerned about it, and so too, was Dill.

⁴⁰Congress, Senate, Congressional Record (9 January 1928), vol. 69, pt. 1.

During the debate on the shingle tariff Dill cast three votes in support of tariff increases and argued strongly for Washington's interests. In so doing he advocated a 25% ad valorem tariff on shingles.⁴¹ His progressive friend, George Norris, opposed Clarence on the tariff issue; both men were watching over the interests of their states.⁴²

In the campaign Dill claimed he could deliver 16 Democratic Senate votes on the tariff issue. The claim did not go unnoticed. Mark Reed, perhaps the most powerful of Washington's lumber men, knew he had Senator Wesley Jones to deliver the Republican votes so he decided to gamble: he crossed party lines and openly supported Dill for the Senate, much to McKintosh's consternation.⁴³

In spite of their differences over the shingle tariff, Norris visited Washington in early October to campaign for his friend. The Seattle Times had a laugh at the expense of the two progressives calling them "mavericks," which was certainly true, but adding they were "useless to their states, the nation, or any party."⁴⁴

Dill emphasized the relative lack of importance of political party designation in the Senate race of 1928. He knew his only hope of winning lay in

Dill sent a copies of his major speech on the tariff issue to the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company. It would not surprise me, letter writer that he was, if he sent copies of the speech to all the lumber companies. Copy of Dill's speech found in Box 22, Folder C.C. Dill, St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Co. collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

⁴¹Ibid. Ibid., (31 January 1928), vol. 69, pt. 2. Ibid., (20 February 1928), vol. 69, pt. 3.

⁴²Lowitt. George Norris, 426-427.

⁴³Tacoma News Tribune, 12 October 1928, 1. Ficken, Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed, 167. Seattle P-I, 19 October 1928, 10.

⁴⁴Seattle Times, 8 October 1928, 1.

convincing voters that the tariff issue crossed party lines Washington state. He urged voters to cast their ballots based on other issues: especially public power and farm relief. Always, he was careful to expound on his strong support for Prohibition.⁴⁵ In addition, Dill attacked McKintosh for his campaign expenditures in the primary, thus cleverly associating McKintosh with Newberryism. The judge was facing an accomplished opponent.⁴⁶

In Tacoma, a Dill stronghold, he opened his campaign for Pierce County having Judge Blanche Miller introduce him. The senator had not forgotten the important role women had played in all of his campaigns.⁴⁷ If he were to win again he would need every woman's vote he could muster; with Rosalie at his side he made a concerted effort to gain the female vote.⁴⁸ But the first state-wide poll of the campaign showed him trailing McKintosh by a two-to-one margin, about the same margin pollsters gave Hoover over Smith.⁴⁹

Dill was particularly concerned about conservative Southwest Washington. The timber industry dominated the region and Dill had not done well there in 1922. Rosalie observed the strain the campaign was putting on her normally cheerful husband and asked what more she could do to help. Clarence asked her to go to Southwest Washington and campaign for him there. In later years Clarence gave Rosalie credit for helping him substantially in the 1928 campaign.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Seattle P-I, 9 October 1928, 7.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Tacoma News Tribune, 12 October 1928, 1.

⁴⁸Everett Daily Herald, 5 November, 1928, 2.

⁴⁹Seattle P-I, 12 October 1928, 22.

⁵⁰Ibid., 26 June 1936, 12. Ibid., 30 June 1936, 2.

One of the reasons Dill trailed early was because he had taken some scoring punches from Floyd Danskin, former speaker of the Washington House of Representatives. Campaigning for McKintosh, Danskin argued Dill's claim of being able to deliver Democratic votes on the tariff issue was spurious since Dill had gone out of his way to alienate himself from the Democratic party. Danskin described - not always accurately - Dill's defection from the Democrats. He especially harped on Dill's lukewarm support of Al Smith. The Seattle Times, as well, repeatedly brought up the irony in Dill's promise to deliver Democrats on the tariff issue.⁵¹

Dill's supporters fired back. Spokane Prosecuting Attorney Greenough described the respect he had seen accorded Dill by other senators on a recent visit to Washington D. C. And Frank Funkhouser, deputy district attorney in Spokane, accused the power trust of financing McKintosh's campaign. The gloves were off. The Senate election of 1928 would be a bare-knuckle fight.⁵²

In spite of the Seattle Times' insistence that Dill mend fences with the national Democratic party, he refused to alter his campaign to please the editors of the Times. In Tacoma Dill returned to his theme, "This is the day of the independent in politics so far as the state of Washington is concerned."⁵³ McKintosh set himself apart from Dill in terms of party loyalty and said he was "for the party, down the line," and lashed out at his opponent as a "nondescript

⁵¹Spokesman Review, 13 October 1928, 6. Seattle Times, 14 October 1928, 6. *Ibid.*, 17 October 1928, 6.

⁵²Spokesman Review, 13 October 1928, 6.

⁵³Seattle Times, 13 October 1928, 1. Seattle P-I, 13 October 1928, 5.

senator, running as an independent."⁵⁴

Running as an independent Dill surely was; the split with Bullitt and Smith was deep and nearly irreconcilable. But he was running as the more progressive candidate, in a state with a history of progressivism and beset with economic troubles in its two major industries: farming and lumber.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Times and Everett Daily Herald boldly predicted, based on a survey of the state, Dill's imminent return to private life.⁵⁶

No such fate would befall the Democratic senator if labor were any barometer of the public mind. Dill had no trouble picking up the support of labor in this election, even though many urban workers were wet. McKintosh was clearly a very conservative candidate and a dry as well.⁵⁷

Dill never let the voters forget his bone-dry position on Prohibition. He expounded on the subject at length, identifying himself with the strict Washington state law - as opposed to the more lax Volstead Act. Moreover, he advocated greater Prohibition enforcement efforts as the correct response to the liquor law's critics who argued it was a failure.⁵⁸ It was mid-October, Dill had been touring the state by automobile speaking in the small towns and large along the way. But in spite of his popular Prohibition position he still trailed in the polls two-to-one.⁵⁹

⁵⁴Ibid., 14 September 1928, 1.

⁵⁵Ibid., 21 September 1928, 13.

⁵⁶Seattle Times, 14 October 1928, 2-3. Everett Daily Herald, 5 November 1928, 2.

⁵⁷Seattle P-I, 15 October 1928, 4. Ibid., 19 October 1928, 10.

⁵⁸Spokesman Review, 15 October 1928, 6.

⁵⁹Seattle P-I, 18 October 1928, 18.

The Seattle Times, however, was not satisfied. It felt Dill's strident harping on Prohibition necessitated a reminder to the public of McKintosh's efforts, as prosecuting attorney of King County, to close down road-houses twenty years ago.⁶⁰ Prohibition was definitely at the fore of the campaign, but it could not be the deciding issue. Both candidates were dry. In banging the drum for Prohibition, Dill was not running against Kenneth McKintosh, he was running against Al Smith, hoping to sway voters prone to vote a straight ticket (Dill was afraid that many voters would vote for Hoover because Smith was a wet Democrat. Clarence wanted to be sure those voters remembered that he and Smith opposed each other on Prohibition).

Fortunately Dill did not have to worry about his staunch position on Prohibition siphoning off labor support. There was no third party candidate to turn to and McKintosh was clearly not a labor man. Indeed the Democrat hoped to obtain 90% of Duncan's 1922 farmer-labor vote.⁶¹ Dill had relatively little trouble gaining the support of the various labor organizations. The Railway Clerks endorsed Dill in mid-October arguing "Our organization wants men in Congress who are known to be favorable to labor. When we get them we do not intend to take a chance at losing them."⁶² Other railway brotherhoods and the Washington state A. F. L. also endorsed Dill.⁶³ The Labor Journal urged all union members to spare no effort in electing Dill and Scott Bullitt.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Seattle Times, 19 October 1928, 6.

⁶¹The Labor World, 12 October 1928, 2.

⁶²Ibid., 19 October 1928, 1.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴The Labor Journal, 12 October 1928, 2.

For his part, McKintosh sought to define the election in terms of the tariff on lumber and shingles. The Spokesman-Review caught the tenor of McKintosh's campaign:

Judge McKintosh, whose speech was applauded, said that the most important issue for the whole country and for this state is the protective tariff. The destructive effect of the Democratic protective tariff, for which his opponent stands, would allow foreign eggs and dairy products to undersell the products of the Colville Valley.⁶⁵

While foreign eggs and dairy products were not the primary concerns of those advocating higher tariffs, nevertheless, McKintosh was doing well with the tariff issue.

The Seattle P.I. now attempted to come to Dill's aid, as it had in 1922, with an editorial headlined; "The Straight Voter Doesn't Use His Head." The Republicans were well aware of Dill's ability to steal the progressive wing of their party. Consequently they spent a great deal of time advocating a straight party vote. With Hoover, an extremely attractive candidate with at least modest progressive credentials at the head of the ticket, it was a compelling argument. The P.I. countered with the claim that the nation, and the state, needed the best of both parties.⁶⁶

By late October everyone knew the state was solidly in the Hoover camp, the question was whether Dill could rip McKintosh from the Presidential coattails. If party lines were adhered to, Dill would soon be in private law practice.⁶⁷ Making matters worse, Hoover and McKintosh were friends, having attended

⁶⁵Spokesman-Review, 19 October 1928, 2. Ibid., 27 October 1928, 6.

⁶⁶Seattle P.I., 20 October 1928, 26.

⁶⁷Tacoma News Tribune, 20 October 1928, 1.

Stanford together. McKintosh did not fail to let this fact slip to the press.⁶⁸ In mid-October Hoover sent McKintosh a telegram of support; the tariff was the first issue Hoover mentioned.⁶⁹

Back home in the Fifth district, Dill's long-time supporters - a number of Spokane's women - met weekly in his home to work for his election. Mailing the verbose senator's campaign letters was a primary task.⁷⁰

Dill preferred to speak on the issue of public power, but McKintosh kept attacking his opponent on the tariff issue forcing him to respond. In Spokane Dill hit on his favorite theme: public power, and reminded voters how his work on radio had kept private individuals from establishing a vested interest in the airwaves.⁷¹ But as he wrapped-up his campaign in King County, McKintosh's home, Dill felt constrained to respond to the judge's tariff-centered campaign.⁷² McKintosh appeared to be winning the contest over who would define the Senate election. Moreover, he was scoring points whenever Dill did respond because of the latter's alienation from the Democratic party. The Democrat's argument that he could deliver his party's votes on the tariff seemed weak considering his party status. Days before the election Dill felt he had possibly overdone his independent theme, and agreed to speak at a Smith rally at the Metropolitan Theater. In his speech at the rally Clarence returned to attacking the private power trust, and

⁶⁸Ibid., Seattle P.I., 27 October 1928, 14. New York Times, 28 October 1928, sect. 3, 2.

⁶⁹Spokesman-Review, 21 October 1928, 1.

⁷⁰Ibid., 26 October 1928, 6.

⁷¹Ibid., 27 October 1928, 6.

⁷²Seattle P.I., 29 October 1928, 4. Ibid., 26 October 1928, 16.

stressed the importance of having a Democratic senator to line-up Senate Democrats on issues of concern to Washington.⁷³ The Seattle Times did not buy Dill's argument for a minute, ". . . the people of this state will realize that one who can't line himself up is hardly to be trusted with the task of lining-up others."⁷⁴

McKintosh now assailed his Democratic opponent from other angles. Dill, in an effort to highlight his integrity, had reminded voters of his war vote saying, "[I] ... risked my entire political career by voting against American entry into the war."⁷⁵ McKintosh responded, "Why wasn't Dill willing to let the dead past bury its dead." For McKintosh, Dill's mentioning the war, considering his war vote, was somehow disrespectful to the honored dead.⁷⁶ But McKintosh's sharper blow landed on Dill's support for Smith's immigration policies. He argued Smith would restrict the number of Swedish and Norwegian immigrants (the Puget Sound area had a large Scandinavian population in the 1920's, and still does).⁷⁷

As the election neared, Dill shifted into an exhausting last days' sprint. Combining public appearances with radio addresses, he fought from behind, as he had the entire campaign, but now with renewed fury. Polls showed him closing in on McKintosh but still substantially behind.⁷⁸ On the Saturday before the election Dill lambasted McKintosh for attempting to ride the coattails of an old college pal into the Senate and insisted McKintosh's only success as a senator would be in

⁷³Ibid., 30 October 1928, 2.

⁷⁴Seattle Times, 1 November 1928, 1.

⁷⁵Seattle P.I., 1 November 1928, 11.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., 2 November 1928, 2. Ibid., 1 November 1928, 18.

supplying a few patronage jobs to friends. The senator then addressed the needs of the people of the state:

I am not interested in jobs for a few friends, but I want to see the half million workers of the state employed at good wages and if we can get a tariff on shingles, cement, farm products, and foreign goods that compete with us there will be more jobs, more prosperity for everyone.⁷⁹

McKintosh was certainly not resting, but in the last week of the campaign Dill outworked him.⁸⁰

The senator also received some much needed help and encouraging news just before the election. The Seattle P.I. once again came to Dill's aid urging the voters to split their tickets.⁸¹ In addition, Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana (D) came to the state to remind the voters of the Republican fiasco regarding Teapot Dome, and appealed for Republican cross-over votes.⁸² On the eve of the election, bettors considered Dill to be closer to McKintosh than he had been at any time in the campaign.⁸³ Straw polls went even further, a sampling of the state's voters recorded a late surge for the incumbent, putting him ahead of McKintosh for the first time.⁸⁴

Dill, as the climax of the campaign approached, took the time to mend fences with Bullitt, endorsing him strongly and campaigning for him on the night

⁷⁹Ibid., 3 November 1928, 11.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 26.

⁸²Ibid., 6 November 1928, 3.

⁸³Ibid., 5 November 1928, 1.

⁸⁴Ibid., 5 November 1928, 3.

before the election.⁸⁵ It was not enough to save Bullitt; Hartley defeated him soundly, while Hoover absolutely devastated Al Smith. Clarence, however, clung to life, trailing McKintosh by only 1,020 votes late on election day. But political experts were not sanguine about the Democrat's chances. Even the P.I. was less than optimistic.⁸⁶ Over the night, however, Dill surged into the lead and stayed there. The Seattle Times was bitter:

On the face of the returns the voters of the state of Washington in yesterday's election gave Herbert Hoover a stupendous majority of a 120,000 or more. But they perversely withheld the support he asked by not sending a solid Republican delegation to Congress.⁸⁷

Dill's victory came in the midst of the largest "perverse" voter turnout the state of Washington had ever seen. Moreover, the Everett Daily Herald, which had enthusiastically supported McKintosh, called the Dill-McKintosh race "one of the thrilling political races in Washington in years."⁸⁸ Indeed it was, and as such is worthy of close scrutiny.

For his part, Dill credited his win to labor and women:

I can never fully repay the people of the state for the confidence they have shown in me by the large independent vote they cast for me on Tuesday. I am especially indebted to the organizations of laboring men throughout the state and to the Capital Conference for Progressive Political Action in Spokane County for the work they did in my behalf.

⁸⁵Ibid., 6 November 1928, 3.

⁸⁶Ibid., 7 November 1928, 1. Spokesman-Review, 7 November 1928, 1.

⁸⁷Seattle Times, 7 November 1928, 1. So downcast at the result of the Senate election were the editors of the Times that they did not feel constrained to confine either their joy at Hoover's triumph, or depression at McKintosh's defeat, to the editorial page.

⁸⁸Everett Daily Herald, 7 November 1928, 1. Ibid., 12 October 1928, 2. Seattle P.I., 7 November 1928, 6.

Mrs. Dill and the women who cooperated throughout the state did invaluable services.⁸⁹

Dill was no doubt correct in thanking both labor and women. But the 1928 Senate election was replete with issues which affected the outcome. Dill was seen as a sincere dry candidate and as someone determined to do something to improve the lot of farmers. Hence his strength in rural agricultural counties. He virtually swept rural eastern Washington. Of course, hailing from that side of the state did not hurt him there. In fact, it was probably the biggest reason he pulled a 16,000 vote majority in Spokane County, his home. Washington was a very provincial state in 1928.⁹⁰

As the labor candidate, Dill could be expected to do well in the urban areas on the west side of the mountains. He did. His home base in the West, Tacoma, gave him a 10,000 vote majority. King County, McKintosh's home, though it went for its favorite son, provided only a 5,000 vote cushion. King County, then, was a key to the election since it did not offset Dill's hometown majority.

Perhaps a look at a few rural Western Washington counties will clarify what happened in King County. Lewis County has historically been one of the most conservative counties in the state. Its economic base was lumber. In the 1928 Senate election, Lewis County went for Dill 7,011 to 5,729. In 1922 Lewis County went for Miles Poindexter 3,641 to 2,786. Nor were such results in conservative rural Western Washington lumber counties unusual.⁹¹ In Kitsap

⁸⁹Spokesman-Review, 8 November 1928, 6.

⁹⁰Fayette Krause, "Democratic Party Politics in the State of Washington During the New Deal" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1971), 25.

⁹¹The tradition of Republican conservatism in these counties can be traced well back into the nineteenth century. But the depression of the 1890s seems to have caused a general move toward Republicanism among the mill and logging company owners in 1896 that lasted into the 1930s and beyond. These people wielded a great deal of influence in their communities and were not above

County, Dill lost by over 400 votes in 1922, in 1928 he won by nearly 1,500. In Gray's Harbor County Poindexter smashed Dill by 1,800 votes, in 1928 Dill upset McKintosh by 700 votes. In Mark Reed's Mason County Dill narrowly lost in 1922, in 1928 he pulled a majority of over 440 votes.⁹² Clearly Dill had persuaded the voters in these lumber counties that he was the candidate who could do the most to deliver a protective tariff, and thus ease their economic burdens.

Other counties were similar; but the point is this: The tariff issue determined the outcome of the Senate race in Washington. Of course there were other factors: the emotional presidential race combined with a gubernatorial race and a Senate race which featured startlingly different candidates brought out a record vote. Large voter turnout almost always favors the candidate identified with the concerns of the common man, in this case Dill. But there had to be a reason that many among the record number of voters crossed over to vote for Clarence Dill. There was.

McKintosh had successfully forced Dill to respond to the tariff issue, but the Democrat had handled it to the satisfaction of most of Washington's voters, as the returns from Washington's lumber counties so clearly show. Those counties

pressuring their employees to vote appropriately. These suggestions held more weight when times were tough and jobs scarce, times such as the late 1920s. Making matters worse in that era was the fact that the radical wing of the labor movement, such as the Industrial Workers of the World, had been largely broken as a result of World War I. See Robert E. Ficken, The Forested Land (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 86. Robert E. Ficken, Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 43, 44.

⁹²Secretary of State, Abstract of the votes polled in the State of Washington in the General Election held 6 November 1928 (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Secretary of State, Abstract of votes polled in the State of Washington in the General Election held 7 November 1922 (Olympia: Government Printing Office).

had always been strong Republican counties. But Dill either won them or narrowly lost them. The issue, then, which cost McKintosh the election, the issue which affected the vote in the urban counties of Pierce and King (still heavily dependent on timber industries as a perusal of Seattle Times editorials in this period clearly shows), was the lumber\shingle\log tariff, and the anemic condition of the timber industry in Washington.⁹³ Dill successfully captured McKintosh's issue of choice, and campaigned as a man who could help the state on the tariff issue, while appealing to farmers at the same time, no mean task.

The Republican newspapers of the day realized the importance of the tariff issue to the Senate race. Hence their non-stop efforts to portray Dill as a man without a party - unable to deliver Democrats on the tariff issue as promised. Rank and file Republicans, however, paid little attention to the bleating Seattle Times and Spokesman-Review, they dutifully cast their ballots for Hoover then betrayed their party by the thousands for Dill.

Just as the Senate election of 1922 has received considerable attention from historians, so too the Senate election of 1928. James Kreiss noted Dill lost only twelve counties, all of which were notable for their coolness toward reform. Some of them were also conspicuous for a lack of interest in timber. Yakima and Walla Walla counties, among others, were unconcerned about a prosperous timber industry. Kreiss further noted that Dill gained votes in rural Western Washington counties but does not suggest a reason.⁹⁴

⁹³Seattle Times, 14 October 1928, 6. Ibid., 17 October 1928, 6. Ibid., 22 October 1928, 6. Ibid., 26 October 1928, 6. Ibid., 30 October 1928, 6. The Times editors seldom mention Dill without ridiculing his ability to help with a protective tariff.

⁹⁴Kreiss, "A County by County Analysis of Voting Trends in the State of Washington from 1920 to 1962," 28.

Robert Cole argues Dill's progressive and dry positions were the keys to victory.⁹⁵ But this theory clearly founders on Prohibition as both candidates were dry. Allowing that some voters cast their ballots for Dill because they were more secure with his record on Prohibition than McKintosh's, it remains unlikely such a factor would explain a swing in diehard Republican counties. Nor would it seem to be a plausible explanation for Dill's astounding strength in urban counties. Prohibition's role lay, along with religion, in helping to turn out the vote in the presidential race. But it had only minimal effect on the Senate race. Hoover defeated Smith by over two to one in Washington state, validating Dill's strategy of divorcing himself from the New Yorker and magnifying Dill's accomplishment in defeating McKintosh. Approximately 100,000 people who voted for Hoover did not vote for McKintosh. Given McKintosh's record as a prohibitionist, it is not conceivable that Prohibition caused such a great number of people to cross-over. Dill's record as a progressive, his support of public power, his appeal to farmers and labor, and most of all, his convincing campaign as a tariff advocate who could deliver Democratic senators on the tariff issue, compelled the cross-over vote, even in traditional Republican counties.

Prohibition also deceived Norman Clark. Clark argues Dill's win was due to his being better known as a dry and his own personality, popularity, and prestige.⁹⁶ No doubt Dill's personality played some role. He was outgoing and friendly while McKintosh was stern and reserved. But Prohibition was not a deciding issue in this campaign. The poor economy of the state was the fundamental issue which made the lumber tariff and farm relief such compelling factors in Washington's Senate election of 1928. Washington's lumber men were

⁹⁵Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919 to 1933," 214.

⁹⁶Clark, The Dry Years: Prohibition and Social Change in Washington, 204.

so desperate for a good sign in the late 1920's that when the stock market crashed in October 1929, newspapers speculated that the disillusion with stocks that was sure to follow might cause people to put their money in more solid investments such as buildings and homes thus helping the lumber business.⁹⁷ Farmers were just as desperate. The price of wheat had fallen from \$1.83 a bushel in 1920 to sixty-seven cents by the end of 1929. As Robert Ficken and Charles LeWarne note in their history of Washington, "Farmers, pressed to the wall before the stock market crash, were pulverized in its aftermath."⁹⁸

The lumber tariff was of prime importance in the western portion of the state; farm relief appealed to the largely agricultural east side. Dill's remarkable accomplishment was that he managed to appeal to both, thus uniting eastern and western portions of a state noted for its division along such lines. In pursuing this accomplishment he successfully convinced many voters, as he had Mark Reed, that the Republican party needed help passing a tariff that would truly benefit Washington state. The argument was plausible: Republicans had failed to deliver an adequate lumber tariff for eight years. Washingtonians, Mark Reed among them, were tired of waiting.

Clarence Dill went back to the Senate determined to do something to help the nation's farmers. President Hoover, too, had made this promise in his campaign and to that end called a special session of Congress in April of 1929.⁹⁹ The President proposed that farmers form marketing organizations and that government create a farm board to supervise the distribution of public funds advanced to those organizations.¹⁰⁰ Dill proposed that the President approve the

⁹⁷Robert Ficken and Charles LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 110.

⁹⁸Ibid., 111.

⁹⁹New York Times, 17 April 1929, 1-2.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

Export Debenture plan which would have, in effect, required the US government to pick up the difference between the world market price of a commodity, and the protected price paid in the US¹⁰¹ Senator Norris, no enemy of farm legislation, remarked that no one's plan addressed the root of the country's farm problem: over production.¹⁰² Unfortunately the plan signed into law in June 1929 did not address the farm surplus either. Just before the vote Dill rose to assess the work of the Senate on farm relief:

After nine years controversy the Congress of the United States is about to pass a farm bill that will probably become a law. It is not a bill such as the majority of the Congress believe will really bring the results the farmers are entitled to have. It does not meet the desires of a majority of the Congress. The bill is in its present form because it is the only kind of a bill the majority of the Congress believe the President of the United States will sign.

The Senate has abandoned the provisions that were designed to control the surplus at the expense of those who create the surplus [McNary-Haugen]. I believe that a majority of the Senate are still of the same opinion they entertained when they voted for bills containing such provisions in past sessions of the Congress. That matter having been eliminated, the Senate proposed the Debenture plan to assist in giving the farmer a part of the tariff that is provided on farm products. That has been dropped, not because a majority of the Senate believe it is not desirable, but because the House and the Senate members believe the President would not sign a bill with such a provision in it.

So the farm bill which is going to the White House is in the form in which it is, contains the provisions which are in it, simply because the majority of the Congress believe only that kind of a bill can receive the signature of the President.¹⁰³

The Debenture plan Dill proposed would not have addressed the farm surplus other than requiring the American people as a whole to pick-up the tab.

¹⁰¹Lowitt, George Norris, 299.

¹⁰²New York Times, 17 April 1929, 2.

¹⁰³Congressional Record (14 June 1929), vol. 71, pt. 3, 2880.

Under the Debenture plan scenario there would have been no motivation for the farmer to curtail production, but significant incentive for him to grow as much as possible, thus exacerbating the problem. The only solution lay in either allowing the market to force a significant number of farmers out of business, thus reducing supply and practically insuring recession, or legislating that government restrict production with near draconian thoroughness. The latter was not an option, given the cherished beliefs of most Americans in 1929. In the end, Dill voted for the President's plan, as did Norris, in the belief some form of farm legislation was better than nothing.¹⁰⁴

Hoover's farm relief program did not solve the nation's agricultural problems, and Clarence Dill continued to advocate the Debenture plan as the nation descended ever deeper into depression. Neither man's solution would have altered that unhappy event. The great historian of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon, describing the heresies of the Gnostics, inadvertently captured the conundrum of the American farm problem of the 1920's and 1930's when he wrote: "The paths of error are various and infinite."¹⁰⁵

Farm relief was irrevocably tied to the tariff question. Senators like Dill argued it was essentially unfair to protect one portion of the country at the expense of another.¹⁰⁶ In this argument Dill, of course, echoed the words and sentiments of Thomas Jefferson. The portion of the country laboring under the tariff of 1922 was the farm belt; having lost the fight to pass strong farm legislation, legislation designed to bring farmers under the effective protection of the tariff, senators from agricultural states tried to reduce tariff duties in order to benefit their people on that end of the equation. Dill now faced a dilemma: he had promised his constituents in Washington to support increased tariffs on shingles, but his political allies and ideological brothers in the Senate were determined to lower the tariff.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 2886.

¹⁰⁵Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1960), 151.

¹⁰⁶Congressional Record (14 June 1929), vol. 71, pt. 3, 2880.

Senator Norris, one of those so determined, recognized Dill's quandary. The Nebraskan realized several of his friends "would have to go along the selfish route in order to maintain themselves in Congress."¹⁰⁷

Dill proceeded to agitate for a tariff on shingles in an attempt to live up to his campaign promise. Moreover, he was amenable to pleasing the lumber men in other ways as well. R. D. Merrill, of Merrill and Ring Lumber Company, wrote Dill a letter explaining the potential of manganese ore on the Olympic Peninsula. Merrill impressed upon Dill the importance of retaining the protective tariff on manganese ore if the Olympic Peninsula deposits were ever to be mined profitably. Steel companies in the east hoped to do away with the ore tariff in hopes of securing a cheaper resource from abroad. Dill responded he was "heartily in favor of a tariff on manganese ore."¹⁰⁸

In the tariff fight Dill argued persuasively in support of Wesley Jones - Washington's Republican senior senator - that the Underwood Tariff, the Wilson tariff of 1913, had devastated Washington's shingle industry.¹⁰⁹ He also argued for the tariff on conservation grounds. Cedar, if not used for shingles, was generally left on the ground and thus wasted.¹¹⁰ In addition, Dill met New York Senator Royal Copeland's (D) argument about shingle quality skillfully. Copeland argued the reason Canadian shingles sold better than American shingles was because of their superior quality. Dill's rejoinder emphasized the economic advantage Canadian manufacturers possessed because of their use of cheap Oriental labor - an option not open to American mills. Consequently, American mills produced lower grade shingles because the expense of producing high grade

¹⁰⁷Lowitt. George Norris, 421.

¹⁰⁸Letter from R. D. Merrill to C. C. Dill, 12 February 1929, Letter to R.D. Merrill from C. C. Dill, 18 February 1929., Merrill and Ring Lumber Company Collection.

¹⁰⁹Congressional Record (12 November 1929), vol. 71, pt. 5, 5454.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 5460.

shingles simply made them uncompetitive. Hence the need for a tariff.¹¹¹

Finished with Senator Copeland, Dill took on Senator Gerald Nye, a North Dakota Republican. Nye argued that Pacific Northwest shingle mills were the victims of their own log suppliers, and when not the victim of suppliers, were partners of the same. Dill demonstrated that while other aspects of the lumber business were still profitable in Washington, the shingle mills were being run out of business.¹¹² In short, his effort on the part of the shingle tariff demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the issue and its importance to Washington state. Indeed, he dominated the debate over the shingle tariff and finished his effort by cataloging the miserable economic performance of Washington's shingle industry in the 1920's.¹¹³

Differing economic interests split the timber, lumber, and shingle businessmen of Washington state, and had an impact on the tariff fight in the Senate. Dill was not interested in securing a tariff on logs, a tariff that could only harm the shingle manufacturer, who depended upon imported Canadian logs. Nor was he in favor of a tariff on lumber, realizing this would drive a wedge between him and his progressive colleagues in the Senate who desired cheap lumber for their constituents. Thus, he was opposed to the Reed strategy, so ably explained in Robert Ficken's Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed.

Reed, fearing the weakness of his position in the Senate, opposed a record vote on any aspect of the timber tariff. He preferred the senators go to the conference committee free to compromise. This strategy meant the sacrificing of any tariff on softwood but placed the remaining timber tariff issues largely in the friendlier hands of the House. However Dill, against all timber tariffs except for that on shingles, and perhaps somewhat anxious to defeat the tariff on logs and

¹¹¹Ibid., 5461.

¹¹²Ibid., 5466.

¹¹³Ibid., 5468-5469.

lumber in order to appease his progressive friends, called for a record vote in the Senate on the shingle tariff, gambling he could win on that issue and that a negative vote on the other timber items might ensue as well.¹¹⁴ In this strategy he had the support of the lumber men's chief lobbyist, a man by the name of Condon. Unfortunately, the Condon-Dill strategy failed miserably and the shingle tariff was defeated 49 to 29.¹¹⁵ As the Seattle Times had warned, Dill could not deliver on his campaign promise. The vote on the log tariff Reed feared now ensued. It was defeated. There was, however, some small consolation for Washington's lumber industry. The final tariff bill included a duty on lumber of one dollar per thousand feet. Dill, leery of his political position in the Senate and at home, agreed to vote for the tariff if his vote was necessary in order to pass the bill. It was not. The tariff passed the Senate, 44 to 42, Dill voting in the negative with many of his progressive friends. Unable to secure the promised rate on shingles, Dill, the progressive Democrat from progressive Washington state, did not want to return home having voted for a tariff which raised the price of a wide assortment of goods necessary to the well being of most of his constituents.

Dill's marriage to Rosalie Jones was a happy one in the late twenties; and her wealth greatly alleviated the financial burdens that a senator, especially one in the midst of a campaign, faces. Still, Clarence had barely won against the conservative Mackintosh and in the effort had made a promise regarding a shingle tariff that he had not been able to keep. But Dill was not a man to dwell on his failures and misfortunes. He preferred instead to look for new challenges, new ways to serve the people of Washington, and in the process demonstrate the

¹¹⁴Robert E. Ficken, Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 173-175.

¹¹⁵Congressional Record (13 November 1929), vol. 71, pt. 5, 5509.

indispensability of C.C. Dill. He did not have to look far to find that challenge; it had been flowing through his adopted state for unknown millennia, provided the primary source of transportation for an extensive Native American civilization, and watered the imaginations of dusty farmers for two generations.

ELECTION OF A GRAND COULEE MAN

Having failed to bring a protective tariff to the shingle industry of Washington, Clarence Dill was eager to accomplish something which would demonstrate his worth to those who elected him. It did not take him long to find a project which both met that need and fitted his political and social philosophy. Dill decided to support the Grand Coulee Dam project on the Columbia river. The people of Central Washington hoped to build Grand Coulee as an electrical power and reclamation project which would bring increased prosperity to the eastern portion of the state. Dill also knew it would be a monument to those who built it and to their western builder mentality. As it turned out, Grand Coulee Dam became the capstone of Dill's Senate career. As such the early history of the Grand Coulee Dam project deserves close attention, as does Dill's role in pushing the dam and in helping elect a president who would support it.

President Hoover and the junior senator from Washington were very different men when it came to their beliefs concerning the role of government. They clashed repeatedly over issues relative to their differing governmental and economic philosophies. On the other hand, they were both very much typical western builders. Unfortunately the Depression, which damaged both the resources of government and the spirits of the people, also kept these two Westerners from cooperating and building Grand Coulee Dam.

The vast majority of lands in Central and Eastern Washington are extremely arid, useless without water. The idea of using the waters of the Columbia to irrigate those lands probably struck the mind of the first agriculturist to look upon both the land and river. But the great river protects its waters as if aware of the plans of men to dilute its strength. For the river has created a course which lies well below the parched and wind swept land. In the north central end of

the potential agricultural lands, just south of the Columbia, lies the Grand Coulee; in 1928 the Coulee was a huge dry river bed, made when a glacier blocked the flow of the Columbia forcing it to find a different path, resulting in the Coulee. When the glacier withdrew its icy hand the turbulent waters escaped into the lower channel leaving the Coulee to eventual desiccation.

The idea of building two dams, one at the southern end of the Coulee to form a reservoir, the other near its mouth to raise the level of the river as the glacier had done so long ago, then filling the Coulee with the Columbia's treasured water had been around for some time. In 1892, Lacklen MacLean proposed building a dam a thousand feet high and thus diverting the waters, as had the glacier, into the Coulee, from whence the waters could be used to irrigate millions of arid acres.¹ MacLean and his grandiose scheme are reminiscent of Stegner's Oliver Ward, about whom Stegner wrote:

...I know that Grandfather was trying to do by personal initiative ... what only the immense power of the federal government ultimately proved able to do. That does not mean he was foolish or mistaken. He was premature. His clock was set on pioneer time. He met trains that had not yet arrived, he waited on platforms that hadn't yet been built, beside tracks that might never be laid. Like many another western pioneer, he had heard the clock of history strike, and counted the strokes wrong. Hope was always out ahead of fact, possibility obscured the outlines of reality.²

MacLean was indeed ahead of his time, as were those who advanced similar ideas in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

In 1918 William Clapp, an Ephrata attorney, suggested to Rufus Woods, the publisher of the Wenatchee Daily World, that the Columbia be dammed in

¹Bruce Mitchell, Flowing Wealth: The Story of Water Resource Development in North Central Washington, 1870-1950 (Wenatchee: Wenatchee Daily World, 1967), 8.

²Stegner, Angle of Repose, 382.

much the same fashion as MacLean had suggested. Woods published Clapp's idea in his paper at that time and never ceased to promote the dam until it became reality.³ In the 1920's, two rival plans - the gravity plan and the pumping plan - competed for the support of both governments and people. As we have seen, the gravity plan had the support of Spokane generally, and private power interests in particular, because it would have brought water from Idaho past Spokane's front door without creating new, and potentially public, hydroelectric power.⁴ The pumping plan featured a 500 foot dam on the Columbia and a powerful pumping system with which to fill the Coulee. This plan had the support of Central Washingtonians, who were generally not averse to the public power potential of the proposed dam. Neither were they concerned with the barbs of the Spokane interests who accused their opponents from Central Washington of being "a little band of land speculators."⁵

The gravity plan soon found favor with many people in the state including Governor Lister.⁶ Preliminary studies were made which encouraged the supporters of the project.⁷ The governor then urged the formation of the Columbia Basin Survey Commission (CBSC) in 1919. The CBSC cooperated with the United States Reclamation Service in studying the gravity plan.⁸ Meanwhile, the pumpers asked an engineer, James O' Sullivan, to study the entire

³Wenatchee Daily World, 18 July 1918.

⁴Ibid., 3 December 1918.

⁵Spokesman-Review, 1920, n.p.

⁶Ibid., 18 February 1939.

⁷Ibid., 22 March 1919.

⁸Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 24.

project. O' Sullivan became convinced the pumping plan was superior to the gravity plan. Thus began a decade long fight between the supporters of the rival plans, the story of which is replete with public versus private power overtones, typical Washington provincialism, and more than a little personal avarice and glory seeking.

The gravity plan supporters were sustained in 1920 when the CBSC published its report.⁹ However, the CBSC was no impartial tribunal as it drew its membership in large part from Spokane. Feeling momentum slip away, the pumpers asked Colonel Hugh Cooper, one of the nation's best known engineers, to make a rather cursory inspection of the proposed pumping project. Cooper was reported to have said, "You are on the right track, don't let them talk you out of it."¹⁰ The United States Reclamation Service then issued its own assessment of the CBSC report, throwing water on the enthusiasm of the Spokane interests, if not the arid land of Central Washington; the Reclamation Service recommended further study of the dam site.¹¹ Needless to say, the Spokane group was not pleased. The Reclamation Service, combined with Colonel Cooper's support of the pumping plan, had dented the gravity plan bandwagon.

The Spokane Chamber of Commerce then hired General George Goethals, builder of the Panama Canal, to affect repairs on that bandwagon and re-establish the gravity plan's momentum.¹² Goethals promptly, perhaps too promptly, did

⁹The Columbia Basin Survey Commission, The Columbia Basin Irrigation Project (Olympia: State of Washington, 1920), 1-125.

¹⁰Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 26.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

what he was paid to do. His report supported the gravity plan with little evidence of original work (he used much of the CBSC field work).¹³ The United States Reclamation Service was not impressed.

The two sides, pumpers and gravity planners, battled one another with neither gaining the upper hand, and no progress on the project, until 1925. In that year the Columbia Basin Commission of the Department of the Interior, chaired by Dr. Elwood Mead - a noted expert on reclamation - decided to study the project. The commission's report favored the gravity plan and advocated the inclusion of hydroelectric power generating facilities in the canal system.¹⁴ With the gravity plan apparently gaining momentum, the Idaho legislature entered the picture declaring the idea of taking water from Idaho and transporting it to Central Washington would not be viewed with equanimity. The gravity plan had suffered a significant defeat; the pumpers rejoiced.¹⁵

In late 1927, senators Jones and Dill introduced a bill which would have made the Columbia Basin Development a federal project, but the bill went nowhere.¹⁶ Senator Jones then sought funds which would have made a complete federal study of the project possible. With the approval of Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover Major John S. Butler, of the Army Corp of Engineers, undertook to make a thorough study of the Columbia Basin Project. Unbeknownst to the supporters of the gravity plan, senators Jones and Dill quietly

¹³George W. Goethals, Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, (Olympia: The Department of Conservation and Development, 1922).

¹⁴Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 27-28.

¹⁵San Poil Eagle, 3 February 1927.

¹⁶Congressional Record (12 December 1927), vol. 69, pt. 1, 474.

asked Butler to direct the bulk of his investigation toward the pumping plan.¹⁷ Butler's study, commonly referred to as the 308 Report, began in 1929 and ultimately resulted in the death of the gravity plan as economically unfeasible while supporting the pumping plan.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the pumpers organized into a group known as the Columbia River Development League (CRDL) and hired James O' Sullivan as Executive Secretary. O' Sullivan's main job was to push for the development of the Columbia Basin through the pumping plan and to oppose projects which would compromise the objectives of the CRDL.¹⁹

Support for the pumping plan now coalesced in the state primarily because of the rising public power issue.²⁰ The Grange, an avid public power booster, supported the pumping plan because of the power to be generated at Grand Coulee Dam, though it had reservations concerning the reclamation aspects of the project (the Grange, a farmers organization, was concerned that reclamation would exacerbate the farm surplus problem).²¹ Public power supporters pushed the project as well, while private power interests argued that sufficient power would soon be available from other sources. Though new power generating facilities were under construction, the fact that the aircraft carrier Lexington had been dispatched to Tacoma to provide electrical power for that city tended to cast doubt

¹⁷Transcript of John Fahey's interview with Clarence Dill on 24 April 1948, 2. In the possession of the author.

¹⁸The Secretary of War, Columbia River and Minor Tributaries (Washington, D.C.: The United States Government Printing Office, 1933), 1064.

¹⁹Wenatchee Daily World, 4 June 1929, 1.

²⁰Wenatchee Daily World, 6 July 1929.

²¹Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 30.

on the argument of private power interests.²² Dill had been responsible for securing the services of the Lexington in providing Tacoma with electrical power. He took good care of his western center of support.

Bolstered by the 308 report and various groups in the state, the pumpers' next step seemed to be to gain the cooperation of the federal government. Meanwhile, public power advocates in Washington state secured the passage of the District Power Bill in November 1930, which Albert Goss, a leading figure in the grange movement, believed would help lower rates and improve service.²³ Goss saw the bill, which empowered those living in unincorporated areas to create public utility districts just as city residents could, as a step toward a statewide power system under the control of the people.²⁴ Dill supported the District Power Bill, placing a copy of the initiative in the Congressional Record, and taking time out from his Senate duties to campaign for it back home.²⁵ While he was firmly committed to public power he was aware of the fact that his campaign for the District Power Bill was a no lose situation. In a letter to Rosalie he wrote, "If we win I'll get much of the credit, and if we lose I'll have renewed the farmers faith in me."²⁶ Dill's concern for farmers was genuine, but he was also a pragmatic politician.

In the fall of 1931, the United States Bureau of Reclamation reviewed the Army's 308 report and concluded the Army had it right: the Bureau supported the

²²Wenatchee Daily World, 14 Dec. 1929, 1.

²³Ibid., 6 November 1930. Ibid., 7 November 1930.

²⁴Grange News, 20 November 1928, 1.

²⁵Congressional Record (11 June 1929), vol. 71, pt. 3, 2636.

²⁶Seattle P.I., 3 July 1936, 3.

pumping plan and the further development of the Columbia Basin.²⁷ Rufus Woods, a long-time Republican, now went to see President Hoover in hope of persuading him to support Columbia Basin development. Senator Jones also saw the President in an effort to elicit his support. They were not successful. Moreover, the Rivers and Harbors Board rejected the Columbia Basin Project on the grounds it was too expensive, there was no market for the power it would create, and because there was a surplus of farm acreage in the nation already.²⁸

On the legislative front, senators Jones and Dill, along with Representative Sam Hill, a Democrat from Dill's old Fifth District, introduced a bill in Congress in January of 1932 providing for development of the Columbia Basin and construction of Grand Coulee Dam. Senator Jones was not sanguine concerning the bill's chances, citing the empty coffers in the treasury and the Depression in general.²⁹ James O' Sullivan was not prepared to hear bad news. He lashed out at the Rivers and Harbors Board, before whom hearings on the Columbia Basin Bill were being held. O'Sullivan pilloried the Board, Dill and Jones in a letter to Rufus Woods. O' Sullivan wrote that the board was:

...a slaughterhouse of proposed projects to kill them off before they can embarrass members of Congress and the administration. By appearing before this board and championing projects advocated by their constituents, members of Congress appear to have done their duty.³⁰

Thus did O'Sullivan begin to give evidence that after spending much of the twenties battling for Grand Coulee Dam, he was slipping into paranoia concerning

²⁷Grange News, 2 October 1931.

²⁸Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 33.

²⁹Wenatchee Daily World, 19 January 1931.

³⁰Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 33.

the Columbia River Basin Project. Jones and Dill supported the project. Dill was especially devoted, as we shall see, but none of his efforts would convince the suspicious and self-righteous mind of O'Sullivan. Unfortunately for all of the supporters of the Columbia Basin plan, in 1931 the Hoover administration had committed itself to building what became Hoover Dam on the Colorado River and was clearly opposed to further power and reclamation projects.³¹

Clarence Dill saw the eventual outcome of the Columbia Basin Development Bill long before it actually happened. Indeed, Hoover's opposition, as noted above, was evident even before Jones and Dill introduced the bill. Thoroughly infected with the "incurable western disease" (the desire to build a country made still more intense by the fascination for reclaiming arid lands through irrigation) Dill was determined to see Grand Coulee built. The question for the Westerner, in light of Hoover's opposition, was how to go about it.³²

With the Depression gripping the country, Democrats knew the party faced a unique opportunity in 1932. Dill, an astute politician, saw it coming well before that. To the *Washingtonian* it was evident Grand Coulee might benefit from having the right man in the White House. One man who came to mind was the newly reelected governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt's smashing victory (a 725,000 vote majority) in November of 1930 had vaulted him into the national presidential spotlight. Clarence had written the governor a letter in December 1928 congratulating him on his first election to the governor's chair in New York. In the letter Dill urged a progressive stance on the nation's problems and avoidance of Prohibition as a national issue.³³ In December 1930, the Dills

³¹Ibid., 34.

³²The phrase quoted is from Stegner, *Angle of Repose*, 367.

³³Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 7 December 1928, Democratic

were invited to the governor's mansion in Albany for a social occasion. Clarence explained to Rosalie at the time that their host was the Democratic party's best hope for 1932.³⁴

A few weeks later, in January 1931, Dill had the opportunity to visit Roosevelt again in Albany. FDR had invited him to dinner and an evening of political discussion.³⁵ The two men hit it off, the conversation centering on the Depression and FDR's possible candidacy for the presidency in 1932.³⁶ Eventually Dill was able to bring-up Grand Coulee Dam. Roosevelt had been made aware of the Columbia Basin development scheme when he campaigned as the 1920 vice presidential nominee in the Pacific Northwest. Dill explained how the plan had changed over the years and elaborated on the opposition private power interests were providing the pumping plan.³⁷ FDR was intrigued by the idea of a Democratic president developing a portion of the country first explored at the order of the original Democratic president, Thomas Jefferson. The two men discussed the dam at length, the governor impressed Dill with his knowledge of geography.³⁸ Dill laid out the entire Army Corp of Engineers Ten Dam Plan for FDR, though it had not yet been made public, and emphasized the public power

National Committee Records, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park.

³⁴Seattle P.I., 4 July 1936, 4.

³⁵Clarence Dill to Henry Ashhurst, 6 February 1937, President's Personal File, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park.

³⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 147.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 148.

aspect of the proposal.³⁹ FDR expressed dismay at Hoover's attitude concerning the project, saying to Dill, "I don't suppose I'll ever be President, but if I am, I'll build that dam." Clarence responded, "That's what I came here to get you to say."⁴⁰

At first, one is inclined to be a little skeptical of Dill's relation of this conversation. But upon further reflection one ought to consider the following. Roosevelt's proclivity for making seemingly spur of the moment promises has been well documented by American historians. His promise to the Russian Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, concerning a second front in Europe in 1942, is perhaps the best known in a long line of such spontaneity.⁴¹ Moreover, FDR had a habit of attempting to appear to be all things to all people, and would often say what a visitor wanted to hear. Finally, Dill claims to have written down the details of his encounter with FDR shortly after his meeting. Indeed, Clarence's relation of various parts of the story changes little throughout his long life as various examples show.⁴² In conclusion, there is little reason to suppose the evening did not transpire much as Dill describes.

Certainly there was a new closeness between the two men commencing shortly after their evening together. For Dill now demonstrated a clear determination to advance FDR's candidacy. He inserted one of the governor's

³⁹Ibid., 150.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Inc., 1970), 233.

⁴²John Fahey's interview with Clarence Dill, 24 April 1948, Dill, Where Water Falls, 147-150. Minor details of the account differ, but Roosevelt agrees to build the dam in both.

speeches on water power into the Congressional Record shortly after their visit.⁴³ FDR sent him a letter, "Thank you so much for putting my message on water power into the record and also for what you said."⁴⁴ In addition to placing the governor's speech in the record, Dill had also mentioned his "fine example of constructive statesmanship" in proposing solutions to the power rate problem.⁴⁵ The two men now exchanged views on legislation pending before Congress, and the senator congratulated Roosevelt on his birthday.⁴⁶

Dill was not content to merely build his relationship with FDR. He went to work creating esteem for the governor wherever he went and was especially careful to extol FDR's virtues to his Senate colleagues.⁴⁷ In 1936 when Rosalie and Clarence were estranged and had little of a complimentary nature to say to one another, she said, "I feel that due credit should be given Clarence for being the first man of prominence who backed Roosevelt's nomination."⁴⁸ Dill trumpeted the New Yorker's praises upon his return to Washington state in March saying, "Governor Roosevelt has two outstanding qualifications . . . he is a winner and he would make a good President."⁴⁹ The senator did not confine himself to

⁴³Congressional Record (20 January 1931), vol. 74, pt. 3, 2657.

⁴⁴Franklin Roosevelt to Clarence Dill, 27 January 1931, FDR Governor's Collection, FDR Library, Hyde Park.

⁴⁵Congressional Record (20 January 1931), vol. 74, pt. 3, 2657.

⁴⁶Telegram, Clarence to Franklin Roosevelt, 25 February 1931. Letter from Franklin Roosevelt to Clarence Dill, 18 February 1932, FDR Governor's Collection.

⁴⁷Clarence Dill to Henry Ashhurst, 6 February 1937.

⁴⁸Seattle P.I., 4 July 1936, 4.

⁴⁹New York Times, 13 March 1931, 16.

advancing Roosevelt, he also lashed out at Hoover, placing the blame for unemployment and high power rates on the President's policies. Scott Bullitt, another of Washington state's leading Democrats, also endorsed FDR for president.⁵⁰

In June, Dill and his wife took a trip to Europe where he was often asked what the United States intended to do about the Depression. Dill's response was that the only solution was a new president and the man to do the job was FDR. When he returned to the United States Dill lauded FDR for his work as governor and informed the eastern media of FDR's strong support in the West.⁵¹

As evidence of his optimism, Dill hoped to energize Washington's Democratic party and lead it in supporting Roosevelt. He believed the Depression created an opportunity to rebuild Washington state's Democratic party.⁵² As early as 3 July 1931, Dill was writing Roosevelt supporters relaying his hope that Washington send an instructed delegation to the Democratic National Convention.⁵³ In November 1931, the senator led Washington's FDR Democrats in the nation's first attempt to instruct a delegation to the national convention.⁵⁴

Nor did Dill confine himself to positive pronouncements in his support of FDR, he went on the attack whenever a challenge to the governor arose. He was one of the first Democrats to criticize John Raskob, Chairman of the Democratic

⁵⁰Ibid., 7 May 1931, 6. Seattle P.I., 14 April 1931, 1.

⁵¹New York Times, 10 June 1931, 52.

⁵²Seattle Times, 2 November 1931, 1.

⁵³Clarence Dill to Philip Lowenthal, 3 July 1931, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁵⁴New York Times, 6 November 1931, 4.

National Committee, but an opponent of FDR, for sending out Prohibition questionnaires apparently designed to harm FDR's chances.⁵⁵ Late in the year there was talk in Washington D.C. of running a progressive Republican, possibly George Norris, as a third party candidate. In spite of his admiration for the Nebraskan, Dill jumped on that possibility in an effort to stamp it out before it got started. He said Roosevelt was the, "best way to meet the threat and even the creation of a third party in 1932."⁵⁶

As the election year of 1932 dawned, Dill intensified his efforts on FDR's behalf. In January he continued to push FDR's candidacy in the Senate, inserting the governor's speeches into the Congressional Record and speaking out on his behalf from the Senate floor.⁵⁷ At the Spokane County Democratic Convention in February, Dill's FDR forces suffered a mild set-back upon failing to secure an instructed delegation to the state convention. Opposition to an instructed delegation from the county came from the Edith Dolan Riley faction of the party.

Riley was a long-time Dill enemy.⁵⁸ After the campaign of 1928 Dill had sent Riley a ten dollar donation to the Spokane County Democratic party with his apologies for being tardy. Riley responded, "Had I received this contribution two years ago it would indeed have been appreciated but I am glad to say that the Spokane County Democratic Organization, despite the efforts of your friends, is in such shape that your contribution is neither needed or desired."⁵⁹ The letter

⁵⁵Ibid., 26 November 1931, 3.

⁵⁶Ibid., 31 December 1931, 9. Seattle P.I., 31 December, 2.

⁵⁷Congressional Record (7 January 1932), vol. 75, pt. 2. Ibid., pt. 3.

⁵⁸Spokesman-Review, 1 February 1932, 1.

⁵⁹Clarence Dill to Mrs. E. D. Riley, 25 April 1928. Edith Riley to C. C. Dill, 1 May 1928. Edith Dolan Riley Manuscript collection, Manuscript Division,

declined in its admiration for Dill from that point. In 1932 Riley felt compelled to warn FDR that Washington state's progressives would try to steal the party from regular Democrats.⁶⁰ There is no record of the FDR's response, but it must have involved a chuckle.

Dill was no more successful at the state level in securing a firmly instructed delegation for Roosevelt. Instead, Washington's delegates were to "labor earnestly, faithfully, and loyally" for the governor's nomination.⁶¹ Fortunately for Dill and FDR, Judson Shorett, head of the Washington delegation, took these instructions seriously and refused to entertain any thoughts concerning another candidate until, as he put it, "the New York Governor's fate was settled."⁶² Should the governor stumble, however, the delegation was sympathetic to the candidacy of John N. Garner of Texas.⁶³ The Seattle P.I., a Hearst paper, supported the Texan. Nevertheless, Washington's delegation was the first to be sent to Chicago under orders to work for FDR's nomination, and as such was a tribute to Dill's and Bullitt's efforts.⁶⁴

In February 1932, after Roosevelt had made clear his intention to seek the presidency, Dill, Senator Cordell Hull of Tennessee, and Homer Cummings conferred with dozens of undecided Democratic senators. These three men were

Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

⁶⁰Edith Riley to Franklin Roosevelt, 12 January 1931. Edith Dolan Riley Manuscript Collection.

⁶¹Seattle P.I., 7 February 1932, 1.

⁶²Seattle Times, 23 June 1932, 9.

⁶³Seattle P.I., 7 February 1932, 8.

⁶⁴Cole, "The Democratic party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 270.

responsible for persuading a number of their colleagues to announce themselves for Roosevelt.⁶⁵ Dill wrote the governor concerning the progress being made in his behalf in Washington D.C., "Things are going very fine here and I think you are getting stronger every day."⁶⁶ Dill also kept Roosevelt's name before the Senate as he continuously made reference to his speeches and inserted them into the Congressional Record.⁶⁷ In the spring of 1932, the Washingtonian's reputation as an FDR booster had grown to the point that he, along with senators Burton Wheeler of Montana and Hull, became known as FDR's "three musketeers."⁶⁸

Dill also kept an eye on developments in Washington state. Responding to a letter from Stephen Chadwick which seemed to indicate growing support for Garner, he reminded Chadwick that Garner, "couldn't get anywhere as a nominee, because of the negro vote in the northern states."⁶⁹

After the North Dakota primary of 17 March 1932, Dill wrote Louis Howe regarding FDR's victory, "It shows that you and Mr. Farley know what you are about and I want to congratulate you most heartily on this result." The governor's victory also occasioned a Dill press release in which he attempted to make "favorite son" candidates appear foolish in the light of the FDR's juggernaut. In addition, Dill recapped the New Yorker's week for the press, "To win the

⁶⁵Frank Freidel, The Triumph, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952-1973), 243.

⁶⁶Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 19 February 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁶⁷Congressional Record (29 February 1932), vol. 75, pt. 5, 4904.

⁶⁸Dill, Where Water Falls, 153-154. James Farley, Behind the Ballots (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938), 89.

⁶⁹Clarence Dill to Stephen Chadwick, 8 March 1932, Stephen F. Chadwick Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

primaries in conservative New Hampshire and in radical North Dakota, and to secure the delegates of the Minnesota convention all in one week, is stopping the 'stop Roosevelt movement' with a vengeance."⁷⁰

The Roosevelt campaign considered the battle for Maine to be a crucial test for their candidate. In March, James Farley asked Dill to go to Maine in an effort to assist in gaining an instructed delegation for Roosevelt. The senator protested he did not know anyone in Maine, but agreed to go at Roosevelt's request. Upon arriving in Portland, Maine, Dill down played his role at the state convention. Newspapermen asked him if he thought he could gain an instructed delegation for Roosevelt. The savvy Westerner demurred saying that he could not "hope to influence" the convention to that extent. Another reporter asked Dill, "If you were a delegate to this convention, what would you try to have the convention do?" Clarence thought for a moment and responded slowly, "I would try to have this convention do what would help most to win the state election here in September."

Dill retired for the evening but was awakened after midnight when Roosevelt supporters knocked on his hotel room door. They informed the senator that his advice had helped immensely, and asked him if he would speak at the end of the convention instead of at the beginning, thereby allowing them to arrange for an instructed delegation. Dill was more than happy to oblige. When FDR heard Maine had voted for an instructed delegation, he was elated and repeated to Dill his promise to build Grand Coulee. Of course, Maine had gone for Roosevelt primarily because of the work of Bob Jackson and his FDR forces. But perhaps

⁷⁰Clarence Dill to Louis Howe, 17 March 1932, and accompanying press release, Democratic National Committee Records.

Dill's presence had helped clarify the thinking of a few Maine delegates.⁷¹ The last week of March was a significant week in FDR's campaign as both the Maine and Iowa delegations fell into his camp.⁷²

While the news for the Roosevelt campaign was cheerful, the conditions in the country were not. In April, Dill inserted into the Congressional Record one of FDR's speeches designed to suggest that the danger the country faced was as serious as war, but that solutions were at hand.⁷³ Moreover, the Washingtonian favorably contrasted FDR's humanitarian philosophy with that of Treasury Secretary Ogden Mills.⁷⁴ Later in the month, Dill advised Howe that he had spoken with several senators who were very impressed with FDR's St. Paul speech.⁷⁵

Back in Washington state, the death of Scott Bullitt stung FDR's forces and removed the state's Roosevelt leader. With the National Convention only two months away, Bullitt would be hard to replace.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, Dill's optimism for FDR's candidacy grew in spite of the large number of candidates who hoped to capitalize on Hoover's unpopularity. In a letter to J. D. Ross, Seattle Superintendent of Lighting, Dill predicted FDR would

⁷¹Farley, Behind the Ballots, 98-99.

⁷²Ibid., 99.

⁷³Congressional Record, (8 April 1932), vol. 75, pt. 7, 7729.

⁷⁴Ibid. Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 9 April 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁷⁵Clarence Dill to Louis Howe, 19 April 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁷⁶Seattle P.I., 11 April 1932, 3.

win the Democratic nomination on the first or second ballot.⁷⁷ But the Roosevelt campaign was afraid that a plethora of "favorite son" candidates would keep Roosevelt from being quickly nominated. Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky was reputed to be entertaining "favorite son" aspirations. Dill conceived the idea of offering the temporary chairmanship of the convention to Barkley in return for his effort to instruct the Kentucky delegation for Roosevelt. After conferring with Farley and Roosevelt, who agreed to the deal, Dill spoke with Barkley and persuaded him to accept the offer.⁷⁸

On 5 June 1932, Dill attended a strategy meeting at Hyde Park along with fifteen other Democratic party leaders. Several important decisions were made at this meeting. First, Dill was assigned responsibility for representing the Roosevelt forces in the fight over Prohibition at the national convention. The senator favored submitting the Prohibition issue to the voters in some form of a referendum, thus neatly sidestepping the issue.⁷⁹ However, FDR's forces preferred to play the liquor question by ear. Following orders, Dill successfully placed the cautious Roosevelt position on Prohibition on the party platform. But when the convention met, Senator David Walsh argued forcefully for complete repeal and offered an amendment to the platform along those lines. Sensing the convention's mood for repeal, Dill called Roosevelt and informed him of the development. Roosevelt then instructed Clarence to have Farley call him.⁸⁰ Meanwhile the platform committee

⁷⁷Clarence Dill to J. D. Ross, 6 May 1932, Seattle Lighting Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

⁷⁸Dill, Where Water Falls, 155-156.

⁷⁹Seattle Times, 23 June 1932, 9.

⁸⁰Perhaps one of the reasons Dill was so attuned to the prohibition mood in the country was because the Washington delegation was predominately wet, and even those who were dry believed repeal was necessary in order to reestablish

voted 35 to 17 for repeal.⁸¹ Three days after Dill's call to Roosevelt the nominee made his appearance in Chicago proclaiming, "The American people are for repeal."⁸² The Washington delegation had remained solid for FDR at every roll call.⁸³

The strategists at the 5 June meeting also decided to advance Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana as permanent chairman of the National Convention in opposition to Jouett Shouse who was associated with Raskob and thus unfriendly to FDR's candidacy.⁸⁴ Indeed, Shouse had made several speeches calling for uninstructed delegations to be sent to the convention. When the Roosevelt camp announced its intent to install Walsh as permanent chairman, the fight was out in the open. At the convention, John Davis, the party's nominee in 1924, led the campaign for Shouse, while Dill and Senator James F. Byrnes of South Carolina argued Roosevelt's case for Walsh. The Washington delegation and the folks back home were proud of the leading role their senator was playing at the convention. The Seattle Times, never one of Clarence's allies, remarked that allowing Dill to lead the fight for Walsh was a reward for his "pioneering work for the Roosevelt movement."⁸⁵ The senator's gift for public speaking came in handy and Walsh won the chairmanship, though Clarence thought he had blown the

respect for law and order in the country. Seattle Times, 24 June 1932, 7.

⁸¹Ibid., 29 June 1932, 1.

⁸²Dill, Where Water Falls, 156-157. Farley, Behind the Ballots, 112-113.

⁸³Seattle Times, 29 June 1932, 18.

⁸⁴Frank Freidel, The Triumph, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952-1973), 293.

⁸⁵Seattle Times, 29 June 1932, 12.

assignment because he had characterized the chairmanship fight as one between conservatives and progressives.⁸⁶ Shouse's forces booed him roundly.⁸⁷

The convention moved on to nominate a presidential candidate. Roosevelt led after three ballots, but there had been no major movement in his favor. Farley and the other strategists believed Texas held the key. On the morning of 1 July, Dill met with Sam Rayburn, John Garner's campaign manager. Garner was a serious candidate, and had the support of William Randolph Hearst's newspaper chain. The Washington delegation was prepared to move to Garner should FDR stumble, as were several other states. Dill and Rayburn discussed Garner's chances and the probability that Newton D. Baker would end up with the nomination should Garner and Roosevelt fail to compromise.⁸⁸ Other Democratic leaders also spoke with Rayburn who eventually met with Farley. Farley virtually assured Rayburn the vice presidency would be Garner's should FDR be nominated. In Behind the Ballots, Farley is at pains to emphasize there was no deal for the vice presidency. Roy Peel, on the other hand, argues there clearly was. Frank Freidel, author of a highly regarded multi-volume biography of FDR, placed Garner in the "decisive role in guaranteeing the nomination to Roosevelt." According to Freidel, Garner was opposed to Al Smith and did not believe Newton Baker could win. Consequently the Texan agreed to release his delegates to FDR. California went quietly, but Texas refused to go unless Garner became the vice presidential candidate. Garner was reluctant to accept the vice presidency, preferring his powerful position as Speaker of the House, but agreed to do so in

⁸⁶Ibid. Dill, Where Water Falls, 158. James Farley, Jim Farley's Story (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1948), 17.

⁸⁷Seattle Times, 29 June 1932, 12.

⁸⁸Dill, Where Water Falls, 159.

order that "the Democrats win one more election."⁸⁹

The vice presidency, of course, eventually went to Garner for his support. But it is worth noting Clarence Dill was prominently mentioned as a possible running mate for FDR.⁹⁰ Indeed, he may well have been the front runner at one time, but dropped out of the picture before second place on the Democratic ticket went to Garner. Dill later maintained he did not want the vice presidency. It may well be that he made his position known during the convention which is why the Seattle P.I. would then report he had dropped out of the running.⁹¹ On the other hand, James Farley argues Clarence was upset over being denied the vice presidency. Whichever account is true, Dill's support of FDR had been long term and invaluable.⁹²

The Washingtonian was instrumental in the two most important fights at the convention: the Prohibition plank and the election of Thomas Walsh to the permanent chairmanship. Furthermore, his work for FDR brought him into consideration for the vice presidency.

Whether Dill had wanted the vice presidency or not, he was not bitter over Garner's selection and was eager to offer advice to the nominee. In a letter to Farley, Clarence congratulated him on his convention strategy and predicted Garner would offset the eastern press's tendency to portray FDR as a radical. Dill went on to express the belief, as did other Roosevelt confidants, that he would be

⁸⁹Farley, Behind the Ballots, 145-152. Roy Peel, The 1932 Campaign (New York: Farrar and Rinehart Inc., 1935), 102. Freidel, Rendezvous With Destiny, 72.

⁹⁰New York Times, 16 June 1932, 12. Freidel, The Triumph, 312-313.

⁹¹Seattle P.I., 30 June 1932, 4. Dill, Where Water Falls, 160.

⁹²Farley, Behind the Ballots, 152-153.

wise to refrain from, ". . . making jaunts about the country." The Westerner expressed the hope that FDR would conduct a more "presidential" campaign. Perhaps he had in mind something similar to Harding's front porch campaign of 1920. Finally Clarence suggested that, based on reliable information, a rapprochement with Al Smith was possible. Farley responded that Smith had already made a statement and seconded Dill's advice about the campaign, without much sincerity.⁹³

In early August, after matching wits for ten days with various species of trout, Dill received a letter from Farley asking him to come east in a few weeks to help with the campaign.⁹⁴ Dill continued to advise Roosevelt against "barnstorming" trips, suggesting his support in the West was solid. Clarence's aversion to such trips was based on his belief candidates who engaged in them seldom won. He cited as evidence William Jennings Bryan, Charles Evans Hughes, and James Cox. The advice was politely received and wisely disregarded. Roosevelt was coming west. Had he not done so, he would have appeared to be unconcerned, perhaps even arrogant about a region sensitive to its status. Roosevelt was not about to be perceived as an eastern provincialist.⁹⁵

Dill now gave Roosevelt's campaign some good advice. Apparently it had originally been Roosevelt's plan to speak in only one Pacific Northwest city. Dill

⁹³Clarence Dill to James Farley, 7 July 1932, Democratic National Committee Records. Freidel, *The Triumph*, 338. James Farley to Clarence Dill, 8 July 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁹⁴James Farley to Clarence Dill, 3 August 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁹⁵Clarence Dill to James Farley, 28 July 1932. James Farley to Clarence Dill, 10 August 1932. Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 2 August 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

explained the folly of such a course to Louis Howe:

for him to come here and make only one speech would be doubly bad. If he speaks only at Portland, the people of Seattle and this state will feel slighted, and if he speaks at Seattle only, the people of Oregon would feel the same way. This is not the worst feature of it.

In case he makes only one speech, there will immediately develop a whispering campaign and possibly a public claim that he is physically unable to deliver a series of campaign speeches after such a long trip. Of course, such a charge would be silly and ridiculous, but I am afraid it would stick in a lot of people's minds.⁹⁶

Roosevelt himself responded to Dill's concerns about a Western trip, explaining he was no Hughes or Cox (he might well have added Al Smith), the people knew him and expected him to come west to hear their concerns.⁹⁷ FDR was right; the times were different, people wanted to believe the man who would be president cared about their problems and was determined to help them.

A letter from Farley, combined with a phone call, reiterated FDR's desire to have Dill in the East when the campaign picked-up steam in September. Dill replied Senate business would detain him until later in the month but hoped to be of much use in the campaign.⁹⁸

A chance to be of service came quickly. In August, Stephen Chadwick wrote Governor Roosevelt informing him of a situation which had been developing in Washington state:

Seattle has three daily newspapers, Times, Post Intelligencer, Star. Since

⁹⁶Clarence Dill to Louis Howe, 6 August 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁹⁷Franklin Roosevelt to Clarence Dill, 13 August 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

⁹⁸James Farley to Clarence Dill, 12 August 1932. Clarence Dill to James Farley, 15 August 1932. James Farley to Clarence Dill, 20 August 1932, Democratic National Committee Records.

the day of your nomination all three have supported you. On August 10 I conferred with Colonel C. B. Blethen, Editor of the Times, who told me that the continued support of his paper would depend upon your pronouncement as to whether or not you would be the President when elected, or whether the presidency would be a triumvirate composed of yourself, Mr. McAdoo and Mr. Hearst.

Mr. Hearst owns the P.I., which is a competitor of Mr. Blethen's paper the Times. The feeling of the Times and its editor Mr. Hearst and his paper is intense [the Times and the P.I. didn't see eye to eye on anything].

The Republican National Committee is doing its utmost to regain the Times support, and Mr. Blethen told me that whether or not he returns to the advocacy of Mr. Hoover will depend entirely upon the strength of your expression of your entire independence of any domination [from Hearst].

The Roosevelt campaign informed Dill of the newspaper situation, asking for his advice. The senator responded that a non-committal reply seemed the best alternative since the possibility of publication could not be ruled out.⁹⁹

Dill went on to advise Howe in regard to campaign support for FDR:

Let me add one suggestion. I think it is extremely important that some notable man who has an excellent radio presence and radio voice make some speeches on the nation wide hook-up during the closing month of the campaign. I have always believed that the speeches of senator Borah and Mr. Hughes, . . . were of tremendous aid to Mr. Hoover in 1928.¹⁰⁰

Roosevelt's campaign strategists thought his suggestion regarding the newspaper situation was sound and were equally impressed with his advice on using radio in the campaign.¹⁰¹ FDR fully intended to make use of radio, but he also knew there could be no substitute for personal appearances across the stricken nation.

⁹⁹Stephen Chadwick to Franklin Roosevelt, 15 August 1932. Louis Howe to Clarence Dill, 31 August 1932. Clarence Dill to Louis Howe, 12 December 1932. Democratic National Committee Records.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Office memo, Louis Howe to J. O' Mahoney, 27 September 1932. Roosevelt Campaign to Clarence Dill, 6 October 1932. Democratic National Committee Records.

The Democratic nominee was determined to campaign in the West.

FDR's train rolled west through the country in the late summer of 1932. The changing landscape symbolized a nation also in the midst of transition, while passing trees filled with decaying auburn leaves represented a people closer to death than life. Should Roosevelt be elected president in November, he would face the greatest challenge an American president had encountered since Lincoln had confronted a defiant South in 1861. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was perhaps the most accomplished politician the American nation had ever produced. Yet he was also fully human; he cared deeply about people, about their future, and about the country. As the rolling wheat fields gave way to the stubborn peaks of the Rockies, he might have wondered if the Depression would prove equally obstinate, and if he could really help the people.

Dill boarded FDR's train in Missoula, Montana in order to have time to help him with his Spokane speech, an oration which would feature comments on Grand Coulee. But the train was delayed and did not reach Spokane until after midnight. FDR did not give his speech, but decided to include his comments on Grand Coulee in his Portland, Oregon speech; after all, he reasoned, Portland was on the great river.¹⁰²

In Seattle, FDR began his remarks with "heartfelt respects" to senator Dill, and mentioned Clarence Martin (candidate for governor) and Homer Bone (candidate for Wesley Jones' Senate seat). FDR went on to affirm his support for the Navy; as a former assistant secretary of the Navy his words held great meaning to the people of Puget Sound.¹⁰³ Finally, he assured the people of Washington of

¹⁰²Dill, Where Water Falls, 161.

¹⁰³As evidence of FDR's sincerity about the Navy, he had the disturbing habit of referring to the Navy as "us" and to the Army as "them" during World War II. Eric Larabee, Commander in Chief (New York: Harper and Row, 1987),

his own awareness of their tribulation:

I have seen enough, however, and heard enough to know how heavily the hand of the great depression has fallen upon this Western country; to see what has happened in this great seaport brings back with keen irony some of the things that Republican leaders used to tell us about stimulation of foreign trade.¹⁰⁴

In Portland FDR hammered at the power trust, advocating strict government regulation, and championed four great river projects, including development of the Columbia.¹⁰⁵ But he did not specifically use the words Grand Coulee. Dill was disappointed.¹⁰⁶ Roosevelt had, in the midst of his speech, fashioned it to fit his audience. Portlanders were interested in Columbia River development, but not Grand Coulee. Dill related in his memoirs that Roosevelt's original speech mentioned Grand Coulee specifically.¹⁰⁷ There is no question, however, as to whether or not FDR made clear his promise to build Grand Coulee. Homer Bone campaigned on that promise in Washington, describing the election of himself and FDR as victories for public power and Grand Coulee Dam.¹⁰⁸

After FDR's western sojourn, Dill continued to campaign on his behalf, spending much of his time barnstorming in the Midwest.¹⁰⁹ He returned to the

142.

¹⁰⁴Seattle P.I., 21 September 1932, 1. FDR's speech was especially noteworthy for his assertion regarding the importance of reciprocal trade.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 22 September 1932, 1.

¹⁰⁶Dill, Where Water Falls, 162.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Seattle P.I., 18 October 1932, 1. Ibid., 5 November 1932, 1.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 3 November 1932, 2. Frank Bell to Monrad Wallgren, 29 October 1932, Saul Hass Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

Pacific Northwest in time to headline a Seattle rally for all of the Democratic party candidates, and took the opportunity to blast the power trust one more time.¹¹⁰ The Democrats, of course, virtually swept the state in November. Roosevelt, Martin, and Bone were all elected, and the Democratic party of Washington was transformed into a power to be reckoned with.¹¹¹

The Depression would have probably made whichever party was not in power successful in 1932. However, the Democrats helped themselves in that year by finally moving to the left politically, thus supplying an ideological alternative to Republican conservatism. Dill had urged this course throughout the 1920's with little success. The Depression brought about circumstances which helped prove the validity of his philosophy. In 1914 Dill had demonstrated the wisdom of his politics, and had begun, in a very small way, to move the party to the left. For that effort he was often outcast from his own party and more often chose not to associate with them. In a very real sense, the election of 1932 was a personal vindication for Clarence Dill.

The election of FDR provided a glimmer of hope to a country which, perhaps for the first time, had begun to question the essential worth of its cherished beliefs and institutions. Agonizingly, the nation waited for the transition period to expire, hopefully before the banking system could do likewise. Finally the reins of government passed to a man intent on bold new solutions. Dill was anxious to take part in the great experiment FDR was about to conduct. He was also determined to build Grand Coulee Dam.

¹¹⁰Seattle P.I., 5 November 1932, 5.

¹¹¹Ibid., 9 November 1932, 1. Cole, "The Democratic party in Washington State, 1919-1933," 283, 291.

THE WATER RISES

After the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as President of the United States, the nation's capital entered a period of frenzy known as the Hundred Days. Dill was very much a part of the New Deal, especially as it related to the Communications Act of 1934. But in 1933, his primary purpose was to secure approval of the Columbia Basin Project. However, he recognized the nation was in the midst of a banking crisis in mid-March and thus patience, at least in relation to Grand Coulee, was a virtue. This prudence and sense of priorities has been inaccurately cited as evidence Dill was cool on the dam.¹ In his battle for Grand Coulee Dill had to contend with those who were opposed to the dam, both in his own state and in Washington D.C., those who were zealous for the dam but knew little of how things were accomplished in the nation's capital, and with a President who had greater concerns than Grand Coulee on his mind. In 1933 Clarence Dill was the one man with both the talent and power to conciliate the dams opponents, focus its supporters on what was possible, and ultimately gain FDR's approval of the great dam.

His initial plan to secure the dam that March was to include it in an unemployment bill of some kind, but there were a number of possible ways to proceed.² On April 1, Dill wrote to James O'Sullivan, congratulating him on his appointment to the Columbia Basin Commission (CBC) as Executive Secretary. The CBC, a creation of the Washington state legislature, was to guide development of the Columbia Basin and negotiate with the federal government

¹Paul Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle" (unpublished manuscript in author's possession, 1992), 317. Wenatchee Daily World, 28 October 1940, 12.

²Clarence Dill to J. D. Ross, 14 March 1933, J. D. Ross Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

toward that purpose.³ Dill cautioned the energetic and headstrong O'Sullivan that pressing the Columbia Basin plan as a reclamation project was not wise given the farm problem; Dill believed it was preferable to present Grand Coulee as a public power project.⁴ In April, Washington's congressional delegation was uncertain as to how best gain the dam's approval. Dill and Representative Sam B. Hill were leaning toward procuring Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds, thus avoiding the need for congressional endorsement. Both Dill and Hill told Albert Goss, Master of the Washington State Grange and CBC member, whom that organization had sent to Washington D.C. to further the basin plan, that pressing Columbia Basin development as a reclamation project was foolhardy. Goss agreed having come to that conclusion himself sometime earlier.⁵ Dill and Hill also informed Goss the project would not become reality without the President's approbation. Goss was amazed at the degree to which everything in the nation's capital awaited the President's personal approval:

I can confirm what they say with reference to the President's approval. He holds this Congress in the hollow of his hand and they will take no action whatsoever except upon his request. I never saw anything quite like it. Therefore, I feel that our whole effort must be made on concentrating upon the President.

The President is under the greatest pressure I have ever seen and it is very difficult to get an appointment. There are so many very grievous problems pressing that all but the most important are being deferred until after Congress adjourns. senator Dill feels confident however that he will be able to get an appointment soon, and I know of nothing to do except press for this appointment as soon as possible.⁶

³Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 311.

⁴Clarence Dill to James O' Sullivan, 1 April 1933, James O' Sullivan Papers, Manuscript Collections, Gonzaga University, Spokane.

⁵Paul Pitzer, "Grand Coulee : The Struggle," 306.

⁶Albert Goss to James O' Sullivan, 13 April 1933, JOSP. Sam B. Hill to

Probably about April 14 Dill saw the President briefly in order to provide him some information on the Grand Coulee project.⁷ The material Dill gave FDR estimated the cost of the project at \$450 million, and it seems likely the President had recently gained other sources of information as well. He said to Dill, "I didn't realize this dam was so big." The two men discussed the ramifications of the project for a while, then Roosevelt said, "I've got to go to bed with this."⁸

On April 17 Roosevelt's secretary called Dill and asked him to come to the White House to discuss the dam with the President. Albert Goss accompanied Dill; Sam Hill would have been there but was delayed by traffic.⁹ Upon entering the President's office, Dill shook hands with Roosevelt and noticed he was being unusually friendly. The senator sensed perhaps bad news was coming. The President began to extol the virtues of the project but then slipped into reiterating all the arguments against the dam. Dill saw his dam slipping away. He decided to make a stand and remind the President of his many promises to build Grand Coulee. In an interview he gave John Fahey in 1948 Dill described the next few minutes as a real "set-to."¹⁰

In reading Dill's memoirs, one cannot help but gain the impression that Dill substantially embellished his argument with FDR. In a letter to Rufus Woods, Dill mentions his disagreement with FDR but makes much less of it than he did in his

James O' Sullivan, 13 April 1933, JOSP.

⁷Dill to Rufus Woods, 22 February 1949, CDP. Dill, Where Water Falls, 167.

⁸John Fahey's transcript of an interview with Clarence Dill, 24 April 1948.

⁹Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 317.

¹⁰Fahey Transcript, 24 April 1948. C. C. Dill to Rufus Woods, 22 February 1949, CDP, Archives, EWSHS, Spokane.

memoirs. Dill's account to Woods is probably fairly accurate; there was a brief disagreement, Dill probably wondered to himself if he had gone too far, then to his relief the President proposed a low dam which might cost only \$40 million.¹¹

Albert Goss also argued that a low dam would not control floods and would make the eventual cost of electricity too high.¹² The meeting did not go as positively as Goss had hoped. The President stated he knew very little about the project, but had the impression it was too large to finance under the present circumstances.¹³ Congress would never authorize the money. Goss suggested pursuing the RFC alternative and FDR responded such a course might be wise. He agreed to assist in securing RFC funds in increments if the project could be approached in that way. The President's help was very much conditional. While the RFC alternative was being explored, FDR wanted to see cost estimates of building the project in two phases - first a low dam, then a high. The President

¹¹Ibid., Dill, Where Water Falls, 167-170. My rendition of Dill's conversation with Roosevelt in early April is derived from three sources, Fahey's interview with Dill in 1948, Dill's letter to Rufus Woods in 1949, and Dill's autobiography. Taken together, the two documents from the forties substantiate Dill's account, written in 1970. The essential points in all three accounts are consistent, thus lending credence to Dill's story. As noted above, the 1970 account is much more dramatized. But perhaps Dill can be excused for a few embellishments as he was eighty six when he wrote Where Water Falls.

¹²Albert Goss to Clarence D. Martin, 17 April 1933, JOSP.

¹³Pitzer makes much of this remark by FDR that he did not know much about the project at this time, implying that Dill's assertion that he had talked to FDR about Grand Coulee in January 1931 was greatly exaggerated or even fabricated. Such an interpretation is not required by the evidence. Dill never claimed to have outlined the project to FDR in the kind of detail the President would require in order to officially support the project. Even after the April 17 meeting FDR insisted on seeing more studies on Grand Coulee before he would render a decision. He specifically wanted to know if the low dam idea was feasible. Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 319.

then mentioned his desire to do something for unemployment relief in the Pacific Northwest, remarking Grand Coulee might help in that regard. The meeting ended on that note. Both men recognized FDR would committ to nothing until he had the figures to study.¹⁴

Goss described Dill's response to the meeting as elation, but was himself a bit nonplussed at the President's reticence. Goss and Dill reacted differently to their meeting with the President because Dill already knew, based on his earlier meeting with FDR, that the President opposed beginning Grand Coulee as a high dam. Thus, the meeting encouraged him because it demonstrated Roosevelt's sincerity about the low dam. Goss discovered Roosevelt's antipathy to the high dam only during the meeting. Dill apparently had not informed Goss of his previous conversation with Roosevelt, perhaps because he considered Goss's presence in Washington D.C. as unnecessary and bothersome.

In later years, Dill suspected FDR had wanted to begin Grand Coulee as a low dam all along and thus was seeking a working compromise at the April 17 meeting. This was probably true. Though FDR was under great pressure to cut government expenses in 1933, there were several factors which would have compelled him to build Grand Coulee Dam. First, he had repeated his promise to build Grand Coulee Dam on numerous occasions, and not just to Dill. Ceremonies at Muscle Shoals in February were just the most recent occasion upon which he had mentioned damming the Columbia at Grand Coulee. Second, the public power issue was directly tied to Grand Coulee and the President had campaigned as a public power man. Roosevelt had a detailed vision for regional development of the US, a vision which was largely based on a systematic use of the nation's great

¹⁴Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan 19 April 1933, JOSP. Albert Goss to Clarence Martin, 17 April 1933, JOSP.

waterways; public power was the cornerstone of that usage.¹⁵ Third, the Pacific Northwest badly needed jobs; Grand Coulee would have helped a great deal. Finally, Dill did have a relationship with Franklin Roosevelt which made the President amenable to helping him.

After the meeting, Goss advised Governor Martin telegrams supporting the project were a waste of time, hard figures were what he needed. In response to Goss's request for figures, O'Sullivan wrote on April 20:

I have made tentative figures based on the knowledge of the cost, and believe we can put in the foundations of the dam and go as high as probably sixty feet above low water, for about sixty million . . . it is my opinion that we could put in the power plant also for this cost, and that we could utilize the turbines that would be required for the high dam.¹⁶

O'Sullivan further assured Goss the CBC was not asking for federal government funds for power construction without having a market for the new power. The power would be sold, he asserted.¹⁷

O'Sullivan now made plans to travel to Washington D.C. to present the Grand Coulee project to the President in detail. There is no question O'Sullivan was the best man for this job. His knowledge of Grand Coulee was encyclopedic. Moreover, everything seemed to hinge on the President's personal approval.¹⁸

After a meeting with the President on May 2, Dill announced the government's tentative plan to develop the Columbia Basin. He explained the plan as it stood would not require congressional action and would cost only about \$60

¹⁵Myron Jordan, "The Kilowatt Wars: James D. Ross, Public Power and the Public Relations Contest for the Hearts and Minds of Pacific Northwesterners" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1991), 250-251.

¹⁶James O' Sullivan to Albert Goss, 20 April 1933, JOSP.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Spokesman-Review, 22 April 1933, 7.

million, exactly O'Sullivan's figure on the cost of the low dam. The RFC and Washington state's unemployment relief fund were to supply the necessary financing. In addition, a power district would have to be formed in the state of Washington to sell the power. The resulting contracts would then be used as a basis for the loan from the RFC.¹⁹

Most Washingtonians were euphoric at the news, then Oregon deflated the mood. The Oregon congressional delegation, led by senator Charles McNary, saw the President on 4 May in an effort to stop Grand Coulee and secure a Columbia river dam of their own. The Oregonians preferred development of the lower river rather than the upper. They reported to the media FDR's apparent support of their position. It seems the Oregonians were under the impression there would only be one dam on the Columbia in the foreseeable future. They were determined it would be on the lower portion.²⁰ While McNary may have believed FDR agreed with him, the President had told him to see Dill.

Meanwhile, Dill, Goss, and O'Sullivan worked on the details of the Columbia Basin plan.²¹ It is important to note that at this time the project did not have the approval of the President. FDR had merely encouraged Dill and the CBC to work on the project, assuming it would be financed largely through the RFC, and bring him a proposal in line with a multi-stage development at substantially lower cost than originally projected.²² The key to developing Grand Coulee as an

¹⁹Wenatchee Daily World, 2 May 1933, 1. Spokesman-Review, 3 May 1933, 3.

²⁰Ibid., 5 May 1933, 3.

²¹James O' Sullivan to Miss Louise Lawton, 6 May 1933, JOSP.

²²Spokesman-Review, 6 May 1933, 2. Probably James O' Sullivan to Rufus Woods, 8 May 1933, JOSP.

RFC project seemed to be the formation of a power district in Washington state which would contract for the sale of power and thus establish the necessary collateral for an RFC loan.²³

Hope for the President's approval of Grand Coulee Dam now rested on the financial attractiveness of the project and Clarence Dill's influence with the President.

O'Sullivan expressed the latter in a letter to his secretary:

Dill can get us the dam if he really wants to, because of his influence with the President . . . Dill can overthrow influence of McNary and Steiwer, Republicans, if he will strive hard enough. It is up to Dill, and if he feels that the people out there want this proposition bad enough, he will get us the dam.²⁴

Moreover, O' Sullivan did not care who got the credit for the dam as long as it was built:

I am not giving out any publicity letting senator Dill do it. We cannot forewarn opposition of our moves and the more senator Dill "fathers" the dam, the more certain we will get it. He is powerful with Roosevelt. I would give him the whole state if he puts it over, as I think he will and soon at that.²⁵

Dill believed he would as well and wanted O'Sullivan to go with him to see the

²³J. A. Ford to the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, 8 May 1933, JOSP.

²⁴James O' Sullivan to Miss Louise Lawton, 11 May 1933, JOSP. Dill wanted the dam every bit as much as O'Sullivan but O'Sullivan could never bring himself to believe anyone wanted the dam as badly as he. Moreover, anyone who disagreed with O'Sullivan on any aspect of the dam, immediately aroused his suspicions as to their motives.

²⁵James O' Sullivan to Miss Louise Lawton, 16 May 1933, JOSP. Thus the fact that Dill made all the official announcements concerning the dam was part of the CBC's strategy. Moreover, it was entirely appropriate since Dill was the leader of Washington's congressional delegation in regard to securing FDR's support of Grand Coulee. However, Dill has suffered no little criticism for his "grabbing the Grand Coulee spotlight." Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 338.

President. For his part, O'Sullivan continued to urge his colleagues in Washington state to create the power district which would handle Grande Coulee's electricity.²⁶

Dill now discovered that if the project were to use RFC funds, the state of Washington would have to come up with one-third of the total, or \$20 million. He informed the President this figure was simply beyond the reach of the state. Apparently undisturbed, FDR promptly responded it might be possible to finance the project through the 3.3 billion dollar Public Works Administration package then working its way through congress.²⁷ After the discussing the possibility of using PWA funds both Dill and FDR decided the senator had better make sure that PWA funds could be used for power projects. To this end Dill went to see senator Robert Wagner (D) of New York, Chairman of the senate committee responsible for the Natioanl Industrial Recovery Act which included the PWA. Wagner referred Dill to senator Hayden of Arizona who was chairman of the Senate portion of the conference committee handling the bill. Hayden objected to including a vague reference authorizing dams; he feared opposition from those opposed to more reclamation dams. But when Dill explained that all he wanted was a power dam, Hayden agreed to insert the words "development of water power" into the paragraph describing acceptable projects for PWA funds.²⁸ These four words would eventually provide FDR the legal basis for beginning Grand Coulee.

²⁶James O'Sullivan to Miss Louise Lawton 16 may 1933, JOSP.

²⁷Dill, Where Water Falls, 172.

²⁸Ibid., 173. Dill's claim to being a party to the writing of the PWA bill are as restricted as suggested above and there is no reason to doubt his veracity on this subject.

In mid-May work on Grand Coulee proceeded on several fronts. On 17 May, in accord with the president's suggestion, though without his final word on the project, Dill filed an application with the federal Power Commission to build Grand Coulee Dam.²⁹ More important, however, than the FPC, was the passage of the Public Works bill, and, ultimately, the president's decision to spend PWA funds on Grand Coulee.

The Columbia Basin Commission and the rest of the state of Washington, even many in Spokane who had at one time opposed Grand Coulee, now waited to see what Dill and FDR could come up with. James E. Ford, Managing Secretary of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, who was in Washington D.C. advancing the cause of the dam, told the Seattle P.I., "The fight for the Columbia Basin Project virtually has simmered down to a one man proposition. senator C. C. Dill has undertaken the task of putting the project across they say and is doing excellent work."³⁰ Ford's pursuit of the dam in the nation's capital is indicative of how the project had won over many in Spokane who had preferred the gravity plan.³¹ Even Dill's longtime enemy William Cowles, publisher of the Spokane Spokesman-Review, was a supporter of the dam by 1932.³²

²⁹Spokesman-Review, 18 May 1933, 1. Ibid., 20 May 1933, 2.

³⁰Seattle P.I., 21 May 1933, 1.

³¹James E. Ford to John Fahey, 18 December 1945, In possession of the author. Spokesman-Review, 7 July 1933, 3.

³²Ralph Dyar, News For An Empire, 408. It is important to note, however, that some of those Spokaneites preferred to see Grand Coulee remain a low dam so its power production would not provide too much competition to private power companies. Also at stake was the Kettle Falls dam site upstream from Grand Coulee. This site was owned by Spokane's Washington Water Power Company, a powerful private utility. A high dam at Grand Coulee would have submerged the site. Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 322.

Though O'Sullivan was willing to give Dill credit for the dam, at least in 1933, he did not particularly like Dill. W. E. Southard, an Ephrata attorney and member of the CBC, cautioned O'Sullivan that it was "not a good idea to trade a good wheel horse even if he is not of a breed to your liking."³³

Peripheral issues also distracted O'Sullivan, specifically the desire of several veteran Grand Coulee supporters to retain state control over the project. O'Sullivan explained reality to these people:

I am working here with one sole objective that is, to get the dam built and built soon. The big issue is, will the state get behind the project, can it, and by what means. All other matters are but side shows. We have not got this money sewed up in a bag, ready to employ engineers. We have got a hard battle ahead to put the state back of this project so it can get federal money.

We cannot dictate to the federal government which will put up the money whether we are to sell all our power to the public, whether John Jones or Tim Smith are to be the engineers, whether we are to build all the big dam now or not but we have got to do what Roosevelt wants. And if I am informed correctly, he has laid down as a condition of his help that the federal government take a hand in building this dam.³⁴

Meanwhile, work continued in Washington state on creating a power district to handle Grand Coulee power.³⁵ However, the question remained as to how the state would organize to build the dam and sell the power.³⁶

In late May it appeared Grand Coulee had the President's confidential approval and would be built through Public Works Administration funds. But

³³W. E. Southard to James O' Sullivan, 22 May 1933, JOSP.

³⁴Telegram, Rufus Woods to James O'Sullivan, 24 May 19 33. James O'Sullivan to Rufus Woods, 25 May 1933, JOSP.

³⁵E. F. Banker to James O'Sullivan, 26 May 1933, JOSP.

³⁶James O'Sullivan to R. W. Reynolds, 28 May 1933. James O'Sullivan to E. W. Southard, 31 May 1933, JOSP. Spokesman-Review, 30 May 1933, 2.

concern remained that the FDR might change his mind. Dill was seen as the key to avoiding that pitfall.³⁷ It was not long before O'Sullivan and the other dam supporters could relax a little, at least privately. In the last days of May, Roosevelt sent a confidential letter to Dill endorsing the project. Although the President had not provided public support, nevertheless, O'Sullivan was ecstatic and even had warm thoughts for Dill. O'Sullivan predicted upon their return to Washington state he and Dill would "show those guys up who are trying to block this project."

Those opposed to Grand Coulee were a strange mixture of Washington's private power interests and public power supporters from west of the cascades. Ralph D. Nichols, a Seattle city councilman, and James D. Ross, head of Seattle City Light (a publicly owned utility), were both advocates of public power but opposed to Grand Coulee.³⁸ They were both afraid that the massive Grand Coulee project would either provide cheap power to private utilities, or allow the federal government to directly compete with public utilities for the sale of electricity.³⁹ Times were tough for both the city and the utility. The Depression was at its nadir and budgets were shrinking with each passing month.⁴⁰ Moreover, Seattle had its own plans for more power production on the Skagit river.⁴¹ Grand Coulee seemed ill timed at best and perhaps completely

³⁷Ibid., 1 June 1933, 8.

³⁸Ibid., 10. O'Sullivan to Rufus Woods, 1 June 1933. O'Sullivan to Louise Lawton, 7 June 1933, JOSE. Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 230.

³⁹Spokesman-Review, 1 June 1933, 10. Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 230, 247, 254.

⁴⁰Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 233.

⁴¹Ibid., 256.

unnecessary.⁴²

In spite of the fact that Seattle's public power leaders opposed his project, Dill continued to support their interests with the Roosevelt administration except for a very brief period in mid 1933 when Grand Coulee negotiations were at their most critical.⁴³ Homer Bone, Washington's junior senator who hailed from Tacoma, agreed with Dill in this strategy.⁴⁴ By the end of the year Dill was again doing what he could to help Ross with the Skagit development.⁴⁵ For his part, Ross had spent most of 1933 in Washington D. C. lobbying for his project.⁴⁶ It was in this work for the development of western Washington's power potential that Bone, long an advocate of public power, pursued the interests of his state. Though he certainly supported Dill's work on behalf of Grand Coulee.⁴⁷

Of course private power interests opposed Grand Coulee in an effort to protect their investments and profit margins. Roosevelt and Dill had specifically in mind the idea that public power projects would provide a "yardstick" by which private power rates could be judged and possibly controlled. Private power advocates, often led by Spokane's Washington Water Power Company, argued that the Pacific Northwest already had an abundance of power, that Grand Coulee's power would be enormously expensive, and that the project's reclamation aspects

⁴²Spokesman-Review, 1 June 1933, 10.

⁴³Clarence Dill To J.D. Ross, 14 March 1933. C.C. Dill to Frank Fitts, 6 July 1933, J. D. Ross Papers.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵C.C. Dill to J.D. Ross, 14 October 1933. Seattle City Light Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

⁴⁶Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 256.

⁴⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 1 November 1933, 8.

would seriously undermine the administration's effort to take excess farm land out of production.⁴⁸ In the summer of 1933 several newspapers advanced the private power argument, and Pacific Power and Light Company President Paul McKee declared that Grand Coulee would only add to an existing power surplus.⁴⁹

In June, as if angry that mere mortals would be so arrogant as to consider altering its course, the lower Columbia flooded in combination with a record high tide. River watchers feared the worst was yet to come as warm weather threatened to swell the turbulent river. The Willamette, too, overflowed its banks and added to the Columbia's fury. Still the dikes along the river appeared to be holding, though farmers patrolled them as if their presence could hold the river back. They could not.⁵⁰ On 14 June, dikes on the river's islands and banks crumbled away, the water sweeping crops and livestock into the sea. The weather bureau offered little hope for relief.⁵¹ The river did not peak until 21 June, a full week later. It was not one of the Columbia's great floods, but it seemed to serve notice: the river would exact a great price should men attempt to dam it.⁵²

Dill now faced a crisis of his own. Ralph Nichols, in a speech in Spokane, accused the senator of pushing Grand Coulee for personal gain. Nichols said Dill owned large amounts of land in the Columbia Basin. Dill responded to the

⁴⁸Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 330, 342,

⁴⁹Bellingham Herald, 11 July 1933. Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 330.

⁵⁰Wenatchee Daily World, 10 June 1933, 1. Spokesman-Review, 13 June 1933, 2.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 14 June 1933, 2.

⁵²Wenatchee Daily World, 21 June 1933, 1. According to a memorial erected at the dam, seventy seven men died in the building of Grand Coulee.

accusation:

Whether you said it, I do not know, and if you did say it, I have no knowledge of where you secured your information. I am sure you do not want to do me an injustice or tell anything that isn't true about me. For that reason I am writing you to say I do not own a foot of land in the Columbia Basin Project, that I haven't any real property in the world with the exception of my home in Spokane, some lots in Spokane and an interest in some property just south of Seattle. I never owned any Columbia Basin land but with one exception. A number of years ago someone induced me to buy a half interest in a 640 acre tract there with a view to raising wheat on it. We didn't raise wheat, we sold it, and I think I made a few hundred dollars out of the transaction.⁵³

Nichols wrote back to Dill apologizing for inaccurately claiming Dill was involved with land speculation in the Columbia Basin. He did not, however, correct his erroneous belief that the entire Grand Coulee project was the result of efforts on the part of various land speculators.⁵⁴ Later in July, Nichols also wrote a letter to former Governor Hay which was passed on to the CBC and read before that group at a luncheon in Spokane. In the letter, Nichols apologized for inaccurately associating Dill's name with land speculation.⁵⁵ Of course, dozens of people had heard Nichols' accusations and would not be stopped from repeating them simply because he publicly retracted them. Moreover, shortly after his apology to Dill, Nichols wrote a letter to the widow of Scott Bullitt in which he associated Dill with land speculators again.⁵⁶ J.D. Ross also repeated this charge and ordered aids to look into the land records of the Columbia Basin in order to find proof of a

⁵³Clarence Dill to Ralph Nichols, 12 June 1933, CDP.

⁵⁴Ralph Nichols to Clarence Dill, 16 June 1933, CDP.

⁵⁵Minutes of the CBC meeting, 21 July 1933, JOSP.

⁵⁶Ralph Nichols to Mrs. Scott Bullitt, 21 July 1933, Seattle Lighting Papers.

scandal.⁵⁷ Of Course, charges that Grand Coulee's supporters were just a bunch of land speculators were added to the arsenal of weapons private power interests brought against the dam.

In mid-June FDR informed Dill the state of Washington would have to come up with \$377,000 for preliminary engineering work if the project were to go forward. If the state could find the engineering money - which Dill believed could be taken from the state's 10 million dollar relief fund - he felt certain FDR would ". . . put his stamp of approval" on the project publicly. Grand Coulee plans at the time anticipated 30 percent of the project would be paid for with PWA funds, the rest would be borrowed from the PWA on a bond issued by the proposed Grand Coulee Power District. Contracts between Washington state and the United States Bureau of Reclamation for the necessary engineering work were in preparation.⁵⁸

Opposition to the state being required to pay the \$377,000 in engineering costs arose, as did opposition to placing "the entire burden" of the project on Washingtonians. But that opposition again came from the private power interests and the uninformed - even under the plan outlined above, the state did not carry the "entire burden."⁵⁹

On 16 June, Dill conferred with the President concerning Grand Coulee and informed him of the progress being made on the state's end (the effort to raise the engineering money and create a power district). Dill also announced the FPC had decided to wave the sixty-day waiting period on the state's request to build the

⁵⁷Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 329.

⁵⁸Wenatchee Daily World, 13 June 1933, 3. Spokesman-Review, 13 June 1933, 6.

⁵⁹Ibid., 14 June 1933, 4. Minutes of the CBC meeting 14 June 1933, JOSP.

dam.⁶⁰

As we have seen, there were certain members of the CBC and other dam supporters who wanted the state to retain control of the project, while borrowing federal money to pay for it. O'Sullivan and Dill thought this attitude was foolish and short-sighted. Albert Goss was one of those who preferred state control - even to the point of abandoning the project should the federal government take it over. However, Goss left the CBC in the middle of the battle and became federal Land Bank Commissioner. Though leaving the fight, Goss advised Rufus Woods to resist letting the federal government run the project.⁶¹

Dill returned home in late June to conciliate the project's friends and face its critics:

I was amazed to learn that there are those who are trying to delay and prevent the building of this dam through insidious propaganda. They say we cannot sell the power. We need sell only 250,000 kilowatts.

Some say there is more power being produced now than we can sell. Of course there is, and why? Because of the profiteering prices charged by the power trust subsidiaries that are paying dividends on watered stocks. Bring down the prices of power to what Tacoma pays with municipal ownership and we will increase power used in Washington by one hundred percent.⁶²

The senator also explained the details of the Columbia Basin project as it now stood. He emphasized there was no plan to make Washingtonians responsible for a huge bonded debt. Rather, the federal government would provide the state's share of the money, using future power revenues as collateral, while providing 30

⁶⁰Spokesman-Review, 17 June 1933, 6.

⁶¹Albert Goss to Rufus Woods, 20 June 1933, JO SP. Wenatchee Daily World, 16 June 1933, 1.

⁶²Ibid., 21 June 1933, 1.

percent of the necessary funds itself.⁶³

The Spokesman-Review, now that it had taken the time to study the plan, liked it much better.⁶⁴ But W. E. Southard and Rufus Woods were still concerned with making Grand Coulee a state-controlled project and pressured O'Sullivan accordingly.⁶⁵ The Spokesman-Review, however, would have no part of any plan, such as that of Southard and Woods, which placed the state's taxpayers on the line. The paper much preferred the plan Dill had explained to the press, or outright federal building of the project, such as was occurring in the Tennessee Valley.⁶⁶

After touring the flooded regions of the lower Columbia, Dill sat down with Governor Clarence Martin to map a strategy for procuring the \$377,000 needed for preliminary engineering work.⁶⁷ Dill told the people of the state of Washington the president's final approval rested on securing the \$377,000 in engineering funds.⁶⁸ After a meeting between the CBC, the Governor, senator Dill, and the State Emergency Unemployment Relief Commission, Dill was able to announce the necessary money would be forthcoming, taken from a \$10 million state bond issue.⁶⁹ That accomplished, the CBC signed a contract with the United

⁶³Ibid., 22 June 1933, 11. Spokesman-Review, 22 June 1933, 6.

⁶⁴Ibid., 23 June 1933, 4.

⁶⁵Rufus Woods to James O'Sullivan, 23 June 1933, JOSP.

⁶⁶Spokesman-Review, 24 June 1933, 4.

⁶⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 27 June 1933, 1.

⁶⁸Ibid., 29 June 1933, 1.

⁶⁹Ibid., 28 June 1933, 1. Ibid., 30 June 1933, 1. Spokesman-Review, 30 June 1933, 1.

States Bureau of Reclamation to do the necessary engineering work.⁷⁰ Dill now proceeded to the next hurdle: securing a contract between the federal government and an as yet unnamed state agency to build the entire project. He informed Washingtonians the president had given his verbal assurance and would make his formal approval soon.⁷¹

Nevertheless, influential people in the state remained opposed to Grand Coulee. Ralph Nichols wrote a lengthy letter to Dill detailing his opposition to any Grand Coulee project which included the state's taxpayers as bearing part of the financial burden. Dill must have laughed to himself as Nichols objections bore no relation to reality - the sale of Grand Coulee's power was the only collateral being offered the federal government.⁷² J.D. Ross also remained firmly opposed to the dam.⁷³

Supporters of the project were ecstatic that work on Grand Coulee was actually going to begin. They decided to hold a ground breaking ceremony at the site featuring all of the state's dignitaries. Dill turned the first shovel full of dirt to the applause of over five thousand people and spoke briefly saying the credit for building Grand Coulee belongs to the people of the state of Washington who elected him to the Senate and to those who had worked so long on the project. But Governor Martin, O'Sullivan, and Judge Charles Levy said of Dill, "He has been the force that has put it over when the time came for it to be put over."⁷⁴

⁷⁰Wenatchee Daily World, 11 July 1933, 1.

⁷¹Spokesman-Review, 1 July 1933, 6.

⁷²Ralph Nichols to Clarence Dill, 3 July 1933, CDP.

⁷³Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 255.

⁷⁴Hillyard Washington Press, 19 July 1933, 1.

Even Rufus Woods, who had opposed Dill in every election and called him a "near traitor" in 1918 said, "And now here I find myself following and supporting senator Dill today, and ready to be a good bird-dog when he wants anything done. You've got to hand it to Dill, our Democratic senator."⁷⁵

Martin also correctly cited the cooperative spirit, the spirit that had built the West, as the key ingredient which had gotten the project under way:

. . . without a doubt the dam would now be built, because the President of the United States, Washington's Congressional delegation, the Columbia Basin Commission, and the Governor of Washington were all working together, harmoniously and determinedly to put it over. He praised the work of senator Dill as indispensable to the success of the project.⁷⁶

Publicly Dill was a hero, though privately Nichols continued his campaign against the dam and Washington's senior senator.

Though ground breaking ceremonies had taken place, the preliminary engineering contracts signed, and a good amount of back slapping had gone on, the project had not received the final approval from the President it needed. Though Dill himself was, "confident President Roosevelt will provide funds to entirely complete the Columbia Basin Project as rapidly as possible," and was personally so dedicated to the project he would "resign from the Senate or do anything else possible to further this great project."⁷⁷ In an effort to do just that, Dill returned to Washington D.C. in late July to meet with federal officials concerning Grand Coulee. In his efforts to push the dam, he met with Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior and head of the PWA, Colonel A. W. Waite of the

⁷⁵Ibid. Wenatchee Daily World, 17 July 1933, 1. Almira Herald, 20 July 1933, 1.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 24 July 1933, 1.

PWA, Dr. Elwood Mead, head of the Bureau of reclamation, and Daniel C. Roper, Secretary of Commerce. Later he met with Budget Director Lewis Douglas. Dill expected to meet with the President after all of the preliminary conferences were completed to seek final approval.⁷⁸

While Dill was in Washington, Congressman Charles Martin of Oregon caused a wave of concern to sweep Washington state in the last week of July when he claimed Bonneville Dam had been approved and thus Grand Coulee was "off the books." Martin asserted Bonneville would supply the region's power needs, leaving Grand Coulee as a reclamation project with no need of reclamation in sight.⁷⁹ Moreover, consternation among Grand Coulee dam supporters increased when Harold Ickes appointed Marshall Dana, Editor of the Oregon Journal, to be one of the regional advisors to the PWA with authority over the Pacific Northwest.⁸⁰ McNary's proclamation, combined with Dana's appointment, made it appear Oregon was besting Washington for federal projects.⁸¹

News from Washington D.C. was even more disheartening. The PWA board, assigned to pass judgement on Grand Coulee, became concerned there would be no market for the dam's power. Grand Coulee had many enemies, one of whom disseminated disturbing reports concerning the dam's potential power market to the board.⁸² Dill suspected private power interests had prejudiced the

⁷⁸Ibid., 25 July 1933, 1.

⁷⁹Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰Jordan, "The Killowatt Wars," 251.

⁸¹Spokesman-Review, 26 July 1933, 1.

⁸²Telegram from Clarence Dill to Governor Clarence Martin, 25 July 1933, Clarence Martin Papers, Archives Dept., Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman Washington.

board; he wired O'Sullivan in Spokane requesting rebuttal information as soon as possible.⁸³

Though Grand Coulee's enemies were legion, Dill had a few friends himself. The senator beseeched the President to encourage the Public Works board to give Grand Coulee immediate attention. The President agreed. In addition, O'Sullivan came through for Dill with data on the prospective market for the dam's power; then Dill, as Roosevelt requested, met with the PWA board on 26 July.⁸⁴ The next day, Dill advised O'Sullivan the meetings had gone well and not to worry about Congressman Martin's "propaganda . . . the President is behind us now."⁸⁵

Though Dill was not too concerned with Martin and McNary, the Spokesman-Review used its sharpest pen on them:

In future dealings with these Portland interests and their bragging Congressman, senators Dill and Bone and Governor Martin will be justified in taking off gloves and speaking bluntly . . . the people must get behind senator Dill and Governor Martin in their insistence that the Grand Coulee Dam be started as soon as plans are completed.⁸⁶

The Spokesman-Review need not have worried. Dill had managed things in Washington D.C. nicely, in spite of the fact Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior and head of the PWA board, had been opposed to the project, as had Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace.⁸⁷ Wallace objected to Grand Coulee because of its

⁸³Telegram, Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 25 July 1933, JOSP.

⁸⁴Telegram, Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 26 July 1933, JOSP. Spokesman-Review, 26 July 1933, 5.

⁸⁵Telegram, Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 27 July 1933, JOSP.

⁸⁶Spokesman-Review, 27 July 1933, 4.

⁸⁷New York Tribune, 5 August 1934, 1. Tacoma News Tribune, 4 August 1934, 1, 8.

long-term reclamation aspects. Nevertheless, after Dill met with the President on 26 July, FDR literally instructed Ickes and the PWA board to approve the project as the Resolution for Special Board document reveals:

Whereas the President, under authority of Section 202 of the National Industrial Recovery Act, has directed the administrator to include in the comprehensive program of Public Works contemplated by said section the Grand Coulee Dam project on the Columbia River in the state of Washington.⁸⁸

The Spokesman-Review's headline on July 28 ran, "Money Ordered Advanced After Dill Confers With President." The story went on to say in part: "This action was taken under specific instructions given by President Roosevelt after his conference yesterday with senator Dill, which left the Board [headed by Ickes] no discretion but to follow orders."⁸⁹ After his meeting with the President, reporters asked Dill for a comment. He remarked he was "delighted," but had really never doubted the project's approval.⁹⁰ He went on to say Grand Coulee was just the beginning of a vast development of the Pacific Northwest. Meanwhile, newspapers which had claimed "Dill couldn't deliver," were being ridiculed by papers with more faith.⁹¹

With the dam under his belt, so to speak, Dill attended to some odds and ends and looked forward to some time off. He encouraged the Northern Pacific

⁸⁸Resolution for Special Board, 27 July 1933. Telegram, James O'Sullivan to Wenatchee Daily World, 27 July 1933, JOSP. Spokesman-Review, 28 July 1933, 1. Wenatchee Daily World, 28 July 1933, 1. Telegram from Clarence Dill to Governor Clarence Martin 26 July 1933, Clarence Martin Papers. This telegram also reveals FDR's instructions to Ickes to approve the project.

⁸⁹Spokesman-Review, 28 July 1933, 1.

⁹⁰Spokesman-Review, 29 July 1933, 1.

⁹¹Wenatchee Daily World, 28 July 1933, 4.

Railroad to build a spur-line to the dam site so as to expedite construction.⁹² Then a few days later, Clarence headed west to Ohio to spend some time with his mother at his old home and then moved on to his new home in Spokane.

Upon returning to Washington state, Dill toured the countryside, explaining what Grand Coulee would mean to the Pacific Northwest and listening to pleas for help with smaller dam and reclamation projects, some of which (i.e. the Rosa project in Yakima and the Skagit project for Seattle) he had been working on for some time and would continue to pursue.⁹³

In mid-September Dill returned to Washington D.C. and met with the President to discuss Grand Coulee. The senator informed FDR that the state had taken steps to halt land speculation in the Columbia Basin. Roosevelt was very pleased, perhaps remembering such speculation was a primary concern of Ickes. After the meeting, Dill assured reporters that funds for a town and a bridge at the dam sight would soon be released. Two days later, Ickes authorized the funds.⁹⁴

Back in Washington state, members of the CBC worried that "flank attacks" might derail Grand Coulee. Indeed, The Washington Water Power Company argued in October 1933 that Grand Coulee should not be the cause of its

⁹²Ibid. Telegram, James O' Sullivan to Wenatchee Daily World, 27 July 1933.

⁹³Clarence Dill to V. Hallstane, 28 August 1933. Telegram, Clarence Dill to J.D. Ross, 14 October 1933, The Seattle lighting Collection. Bellingham Evening News, 26 August 1933, 1. Ibid., 24 August 1933, 1. There was a period in which Dill did not favor the Skagit project because he feared it might compromise Grand Coulee. Once Grand Coulee had been approved, Dill returned to supporting the the Skagit project. Clarence Dill to John Ballaine, 6 July 1933, Ballaine Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, Seattle.

⁹⁴Spokesman-Review, 13 September 1933, 1. Ibid., 15 September 1933, 2.

losing the Kettle Falls site, and that federal construction amounted to an unfair subsidy. Frank Post, President of WWP, called for the power sold from Grand Coulee to be priced at the true cost of production and that the agency selling the power be required to return equitable taxes to the state.⁹⁵ If WWP was able to retain its rights to Kettle Falls, the high dam at Grand Coulee could not be built, thus Grand Coulee's power production would be held in check. Unfortunately for WWP, the federal Power Commission denied the company's application for a permanent license to the Kettle Falls site in January 1934, and its Washington state permit expired that July.⁹⁶ In light of such attacks and others, Ellsworth French, one of the worriers, urged Dill to push for five or six million dollars to be authorized before Congress reconvened, so as to put the dam on solid ground. This kind of concern, sometimes real but usually imaginary, would plague Grand Coulee until Congress formally approved the high dam in 1935.⁹⁷

Far from scrapping Grand Coulee, the PWA, Dill announced late in October, was considering making it entirely a federal project. Construction of the dam would be facilitated should the federal government take over the project completely. For the federal government possessed powers the CBC and the state of Washington lacked. For example, the it has superior powers of eminent domain, not the least of which is the authority to begin condemnation proceedings against lands to be used for dams then begin construction without waiting for final adjudication of the suit. Also, if the federal government conducted the project, contracts between it and the state of Washington would be considerably less

⁹⁵Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 342.

⁹⁶Ibid., 363.

⁹⁷Ellsworth French to C. C. Dill, 23 October 1933, JOSP. Spokesman-Review, 25 October 1933, 1.

detailed.⁹⁸

In early November, the Columbia Basin Commission met with senator Dill and Governor Martin and signed contracts with the federal government which made Grand Coulee dam a completely federal project. The entire project would be financed through PWA and built by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. Moreover, the federal government intended to maintain ownership of the project.⁹⁹ Dill immediately began to call for a comprehensive authority along the lines of TVA to administer the Columbia River Basin. However, Ickes persuaded FDR that a regional authority for the Columbia River Valley was not necessary.¹⁰⁰

Though Dill lost that fight with Ickes he won another one with the Secretary about the same time. A number of Washington's cities had propped projects which depended for funding upon approval from Ickes' Public Works Administration. But the Secretary was reluctant to approve such projects for fear Washington, because of massive outlays of federal money for Grand Coulee, was getting more than its share of the federal purse. On November 16, 1933 Dill protested such treatment to FDR. The President solved the problem by directing Ickes to transfer the municipal projects in question to Harry Hopkins Civil Works Administration.¹⁰¹ Dill's efforts meant that 10,000 more men would get jobs in Washington state on federal projects.¹⁰²

⁹⁸Ibid., 26 October 1933, 1.

⁹⁹Ibid., 2 November 1933, 1. Wenatchee Daily World, 7 November 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 3 November 1933, 10. Richard Lowitt, The New Deal and the West (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 170-171.

¹⁰¹Spokesman-Review, 17 November 1933, 1.

¹⁰²Ibid., 1,2.

Clarence Dill kept his eye on "his dam" as the last year of his second term came to a close. Unfortunately, so did some of the members of the CBC. As 1933 turned into 1934, James O'Sullivan and others pestered Dill with letters claiming the plans for the low dam were not adequate to allow the later superimposing of the high dam. This after the plans for the dam had just been changed to ensure that a high dam could be erected on the low dam at some future date.¹⁰³ What O'Sullivan was really after, however, was construction of the high dam, or at least its foundation, rather than the low dam.¹⁰⁴ In January, Dill responded to O'Sullivan's entreaties:

I do wish you would try to put a stop to this agitation about the foundation of the low dam not being satisfactory for superimposing the high dam. Dr. Mead stated when he was in Spokane that the plans are being changed to make the low dam entirely satisfactory. I have just talked with him and he tells me the entire plans are being revised on that basis. Neither he nor I can understand why this agitation should have been started again. It causes a lot of mail for me to answer and only tends to arouse dissatisfaction out there regarding the work we are doing.

I am sure you can make it clear to your friends that this agitation is entirely unnecessary. Besides, it is likely to give the enemies of the proposal here something to talk about and everything is running so smoothly that I want to avoid that. The big thing now is to get these plans finished, get the specifications announced and the bids called for so that we can actually go to work on the building of the low dam. We will take care of providing for the high dam once we get the contracts let and actual work going for the low dam.¹⁰⁵

O'Sullivan responded to Dill with a letter in which he asked the senator if it were not possible to get more money for the dam in order to make the low dam more compatible with the high dam. O'Sullivan was no politician. Dill attempted

¹⁰³Ibid., 26 November 1933, n.p. Wenatchee Daily World, 27 November 1933, 1.

¹⁰⁴Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 349.

¹⁰⁵Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 31 January 1934, JOSP.

to explain the exigencies of Washington D.C. to him:

My reasons for being so insistent that we avoid too much public discussion about the high dam now is that another public works appropriation is coming up in Congress and I am anxious to avoid any possibility of a limitation against the Grand Coulee. If those who are opposed to it, could make it appear that this dam is to irrigate more land now or in the immediate future, they might use that as an excuse to prevent expenditure of even the \$63 million.

I am sure we can get satisfactory plans for the foundations of the low dam but we must build the power plant and the dam for \$60 million. It is unthinkable to reopen this question for more money at this time. Once we get the low dam actually started and have the foundation actually worked upon, you will find me just as aggressive for the high dam as you have ever been. I am simply trying to avoid pitfalls by keeping away from that discussion now and I must depend upon you and other friends of the project to help me. It is extremely important that we get the contract let early this summer so we can have a big force of men working when the President visits the dam site.¹⁰⁶

O'Sullivan paid no attention. His love for the high dam combined with his concern for the details of the project blinded him to the realities of politics. He responded to Dill's letter with assurances that he was not "striking for the high dam now," then proceeded to do just that. He had the support of another engineer who claimed the low dam, as planned, would not be adequate to serve as a base for the high dam. O'Sullivan advocated using the \$60 million to construct a firm basis for the high dam, effectively abandoning Roosevelt's low dam idea¹⁰⁷

Dill probably telephoned S. O. Harper, Acting Chief Engineer of the project, because O'Sullivan shortly received a letter from Harper explaining that contracts would soon be let (another O'Sullivan concern) and that the low dam was entirely adequate to serve as a basis for the high dam. Harper explained to O'Sullivan:

¹⁰⁶Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 14 February 1934, JOSP.

¹⁰⁷James O'Sullivan to Clarence Dill, 19 February 1934, JOSP.

The dam will be a gravity section with its top at an elevation of 1,116.0. Small portion of the downstream tow to elevation 935 will be included to serve as a coffer dam for the completion of the high dam. In this manner practically all the investment made at this time can be utilized to full advantage in the construction of the high dam.¹⁰⁸

In addition to Harper's letter, Dill wrote to O'Sullivan in another attempt to make him understand the political dynamics of the project. However, this time his tone was less patient:

I have read the letters of Mr. Morse and Mr. Darland [associates of O'Sullivan], and all I can say is that we simply must not attempt to change the \$63 million allocation and we must build the dam to whatever height it is possible to build it with a power plant also for the \$63 million. If there isn't enough money to build it to a height of 1,085 feet [elevation], then build it to 1,060 feet; if not enough for that, then make it 1,040 feet, if not enough for that, make it 1,000 feet. In other words, we must have a dam and power plant for this money, and then get additional money for a higher dam at a later date.

We want to get just as much foundation for the high dam in as possible, but once the specifications are made up for this low dam, we must go through with it and then if there is some loss when the high dam is built, that must be absorbed in the future.¹⁰⁹

Dill had problems in the nation's capital as well. There were some minor hold-ups in calling for bids on the project which required his time, but Mead and Ickes were cooperative, and the issue was soon settled.¹¹⁰ But O'Sullivan had become very agitated about the delays and sent a telegram to Dill advising he request the CBC send a "resolution" to Ickes.¹¹¹ Dill's calm response no doubt caused O'Sullivan's suspicions that Dill was not on board for the high dam to

¹⁰⁸S. O. Harper to James O'Sullivan, 21 February 1934, JOSP.

¹⁰⁹Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 23 February 1934, JOSP.

¹¹⁰Telegram, Clarence Dill to James O'Sullivan, 7 April 1934, JOSP.

¹¹¹Telegram, James O'Sullivan to Clarence Dill, 6 April 1934, JOSP.

increase.¹¹²

O'Sullivan's long-term dislike for Dill and his politics, recently exacerbated by their disagreement over the low dam specifications, now developed into mistrust and even hatred. In a letter to Ray Clark on 5 July 1934 he asserted there was an effort, featuring graft, to throw the main contract for construction of the dam to the Six Companies, one of the main contenders for the job of building Grand Coulee. Moreover, he associated his stand for the high dam with honesty, implying those favoring the project as approved by the government were grafters. O'Sullivan was also concerned the Spokane crowd would be "running the show" when the President visited later in the summer. O'Sullivan's letter to Clark reveals his state of mind:

My job here is a hot spot. Lots of gravy mixed up in the Six Company's bid. Politicians, grafters, etc., are trying to horn in on Mason [a company competing with Six Companies for the main contract]. The issue between the high dam and the low dam is acute. My stand for the high dam and for honest bids has made things pretty warm for me lately.

W. R. Jarrell, Secret Service Agent, Pacific Northwest, Seattle, Washington, seems to be the one who can tell the most about the President's trip. I wrote you about getting the different communities down there organized, and keeping Spokane from running the show. The same old game which was played for years is intended.¹¹³

Two days later, O'Sullivan wrote to Rufus woods, making more explicit his accusations:

Here is some of the inside stuff. Dill saw Sam Mason and arranged for an interview between Funkhouser [a Dill associate] and Mason. Funkhouser suggested that he could act as attorney for Mason in getting

¹¹²George Sundborg, Hail Columbia: The Thirty Year Struggle for Grand Coulee (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 262-265. Even George Sundborg, who casts O' Sullivan as the hero of the fight for Grand Coulee in Hail Columbia, admits O'Sullivan had an overly suspicious nature.

¹¹³James O'Sullivan to Ray Clark, 5 July 1934, JOSP.

him the job, in preparing articles of incorporation and in getting him the high dam. He wanted a \$100,000 service fee for this project. Silas Mason, when informed, ordered all his men to clear out of here to get away from the pressure. Dill and Funkhouser are having fits now, fearing this matter will get to Ickes.

McGovern [a Spokane area member of the CBC] was slated to inform the Six Companies if Mason could get a bond. He did so, saying that he couldn't. The Six Companies then raised their bid \$5 million. McGovern is pounding away at the Mason Company, trying to hook in. Funkhouser is constantly on their trail. Mead [head of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation] has been trying to throw the job to the Six Companies. I get this dope from men on the inside of the Mason Company. Funkhouser sounded out Seelig yesterday to ascertain if Seelig would not support a movement to have the commission get rid of me. He is going to have a conference with Seelig on this matter Monday.¹¹⁴

Harold Ickes and FDR were apparently not involved in what O'Sullivan saw as graft, but anyone pushing for completion of the low dam as planned was smeared in this letter, especially Dill, as Funkhouser was an associate of Dill. McGovern, who according to O'Sullivan was attempting to ingratiate himself with both companies, was from Spokane, and that was enough in O'Sullivan's mind to discredit anyone. Even Dr. Mead was trying, in O'Sullivan's view, to "throw the job to the Six Companies." However his source on Mead were men in the Mason Company. While there were, no doubt, rumors flying around the construction site concerning graft - there always are - the real catalyst for O'Sullivan's charges was the effort to get him off the CBC, which was real and had much to do with his agitation over the high dam. Dill agreed that it was time to remove O'Sullivan. But the secretary's supporters on the CBC outnumbered his detractors. He retained his position¹¹⁵

Making O'Sullivan's aspersions even more dubious was the fact that he

¹¹⁴James O'Sullivan to Rufus Woods, 7 July 1934, JOSP.

¹¹⁵Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 366.

alleged actual graft took place with the Six Companies, but Mason stood firm and wanted nothing to do with the grafters. Since the contract went to Mason, either the criminals, who included Dr. Mead in this scenario, were not very strong politically, or O'Sullivan's charges were not based on fact.

Now O'Sullivan turned his sights on selling "the president for the high dam on his visit."¹¹⁶ O'Sullivan's enemies, as he perceived them, were clearly Dill and McGovern, Spokane men who favored FDR's plan for the low dam to serve as a basis for the high dam:

There are an amazing number of rumors regarding what the president will do concerning the high dam. Some of these indicate that he is on the verge of authorizing the high dam. However, the activity of senator Dill and J. E. McGovern in securing control of all invitations would indicate an effort to keep the President from learning of the need of the high dam. It is particularly important that President Roosevelt should understand that the power trust is still working hard to defeat the high dam and that he should personally direct the federal power commission and the Bureau of Reclamation to protect the power and water rights necessary for the completed structure.¹¹⁷

O'Sullivan's errors and concerns in this letter reveal a startlingly misinformed and suspicious mind. He assumes the President was uninformed about the high dam when in fact both Dill and Goss had fully explained it to him, Dill on more than one occasion. Moreover, he associated Dill with private power interests and believed Dill had no desire to build the high dam. Finally, he saw malevolence in the state's senior senator organizing a visit by the President to his state.

In early August 1934, FDR visited Grand Coulee. There was a ceremony with all of the trimmings and standard speeches. Clarence Dill was clearly the man

¹¹⁶James O'Sullivan to John Smith, 18 July 1934, JOSP.

¹¹⁷O' Sullivan to Albert Goss, 28 July 1934, JOSP.

of the hour but graciously gave FDR the credit for building the dam.¹¹⁸ Shortly after the celebration, O'Sullivan wrote this letter to Ray Clark:

I think you are right in saying that a showdown is very near at hand. The gang here have been framing me. McGovern, assisted by Funkhouser and Dill, grabbed control of the President's reception. This gang here secured the publicity from Washington D.C. stating that the commission was through and that I was offensive. They tried to keep any information about the high dam or reclamation from getting to the President. They have suppressed all publicity about the Soap Lake meeting, which was the biggest event of all. I showed the President all of the exhibits of Columbia Basin products and then introduced myself. He said, 'You do not have to introduce yourself, O'Sullivan, I know all about you. You have done wonderful work for this project and you will have my support in carrying on your work.' He said that loudly in the presence of senators Bone and Dill and a number in the audience. senator Ronald writes me that he has learned disquieting things in Olympia. The plan was to oust me at the next meeting of the commission.

The real issue is whether we are going to get the high dam or the low dam. I am in close touch with the secret service, and believe me, they have got McGovern, Dill, Funkhouser, and that gang tabbed . . .

McGovern, Dill and Funkhouser plan to shut me out entirely. I forced them to have the President's car stop at the exhibit at Soap Lake. All the boys cooperated fine in getting out banners, ribbons, etc. on the high dam. We actually sold Roosevelt on the high dam and on reclamation in spite of them . . .

The gang here have made some combination, with one or two at Ephrata, recent publicity in the Star, written by someone in Ephrata, leaves me completely out as ever having done anything for the project . . .

The administration knows of the efforts of the gang to keep any information regarding reclamation and the high dam from him [Roosevelt]. I can say that I stand ace high with Ickes and the President.¹¹⁹

It is ironic that O'Sullivan would claim to stand "ace high" with Ickes, who

¹¹⁸Tacoma News Tribune, 4 August 1934, 1,8. Seattle Star, 5 August 1934, n.p. New York Tribune, 5 August 1934, 1-2.

¹¹⁹James O'Sullivan to Ray Clark, 8 August 1934, JOSP.

would have never built the dam had it been up to him.¹²⁰ This letter also mentions the complete fiction, so often repeated, that banners on the roadside combined with O'Sullivan's efforts on the day of the celebration, convinced FDR to build the high dam.¹²¹ The truth is Clarence Dill and FDR always intended to build the high dam; O'Sullivan's opinion to the contrary was the product of a suspicious imagination. Moreover, if FDR had not been inclined to build the high dam, roadside banners would not have convinced him to build it. However, Ickes, who accompanied FDR on this trip, admitted that the sheer grandeur of the landscape and potential of the project caused him to become a supporter of the high dam.¹²²

In the 1930's there was no doubt as to who brought the dam to Washington state. Clarence Dill was a hero in the eyes of most people and easily the most popular political figure in the state. Even W. H. Cowles, publisher of the Spokesman-Review and Dill's most bitter political enemy, sought to make his peace with the senator. Hearing he was considering retirement in 1934, Cowles visited Dill in Washington D.C. and expressed his intention to publicly support the Democrat's return to the senate so that he could watch over the dam. Dill replied, "Mr. Cowles, don't you ever allow the Spokesman-Review to support me. I could never convince the people of Spokane I hadn't sold out to you."¹²³

While Dill was a hero in the thirties, history has not been especially kind to

¹²⁰New York Tribune, 5 August 1934, 1. Tacoma News Tribune, 4 August 1934, 1,8.

¹²¹Jalmar Johnson, Builders of the Northwest (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1963), 223-224. Sundborg, Hail Columbia, 265-270.

¹²²Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 371.

¹²³Dill, Where Water Falls, 200. Ralph Dyar, News for an Empire (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1952), 146.

him in regard to his role in building Grand Coulee Dam. George Sundborg's Hail Columbia places the lion's share of the credit for the dam on James O'Sullivan, from whose papers Sundborg's book is almost exclusively drawn. Moreover, Sundborg repeats O'Sullivan's charges of graft, but uses the term "congressman" instead of Dill's name.¹²⁴ In addition, Sundborg carelessly used information from Paul Mallon's syndicated column of the summer of 1934, in which Mallon accused a "senator" (everyone knew he meant Dill) of land graft concerning Grand Coulee. In the column, Mallon asserted the PWA, ". . . has records to show that the senator used dummy names in buying up the surrounding ground and is at a loss about what to do about it." Mallon goes on to say the senator's dealings were, ". . . discovered by the various agents Mr. Ickes has put on the job. He has all the facts, but he is in an embarrassing position. The senator is a good Democrat and a new dealer." Mallon then completely contradicts his two previous statements about proof:

If Mr. Ickes were sure of his ground he would have the senator indicted and tried. But he is not sure. He knows that no other aspersion has been cast upon the senator's record. He knows the senator stands well with postmaster general Farley and all the other new dealers [Mallon was not an admirer of the president's economic and social philosophies].¹²⁵

Apparently not content to paint the "senator" with a brush of graft, Mallon

¹²⁴Sundborg, Hail Columbia, 253, 260, 277-284.

¹²⁵An evening paper in Washington D.C. in the summer of 1934.

also implied less than ethical behavior on the part of Ickes and Farley.¹²⁶ Sundborg went even further than Mallon, charging Dill, by name this time, with land graft and implying Dill decided not to seek reelection because Ickes knew about it. Sundborg further damaged Dill in that he failed to mention Raymond Clapper's column of 15 October 1934, in which Clapper responded to Mallon. Clapper's column read:

Many rumors of land speculation around Grand Coulee have been circulated. Some of them involved senator Dill, who is retiring at the end of his present term. He has emphatically denied any interest in land around Grand Coulee. Secretary of Interior Ickes does not admit having investigated these rumors, but his chief investigator, Louis R. Glavis, did make a thorough investigation on the field and is emphatic in denying that anything was found involving senator Dill. Others in the state also have made investigations and give the same clean bill of health.

In these stories, much has been made of the fact that Mr. Bell, who was senator Dill's secretary for years, had a farm in Grant County, where the Grand Coulee reclamation benefits would fall. His home is at Ephrata, the county seat, and for years he developed farms and sold them. Some years ago Mr. Bell joined with associates in the community and took options on about 16,000 acres of land, making a contract with Grant County to buy it at \$1.25 per acre . . .

The enterprise was started shortly before the 1929 crash and, although numerous transfers of small parcels of this land were recorded, the depression killed off what prospects the group had, and expected profits did not materialize.¹²⁷

Dill had nothing to do with land speculation in the Columbia Basin, but the rumors would not go away, and they hurt him when his work on Grand Coulee

¹²⁶In his Diary Ickes takes note of columnists like Mallon, who was no friend of the New Deal, remarking that a number of Roosevelt administration officials were in the process of preparing libel lawsuits so as to put a damper on the rampant rumor mongering going on in Washington D.C. FDR did not encourage such lawsuits and hoped the rumors would die peacefully. Harold Ickes. The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes: The First 1000 Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 278-279.

¹²⁷The Washington Post, 15 October 1934, n.p.

was assessed by writers like Sundborg. Other accounts of how the dam was built tended to follow Sundborg's lead and de-emphasized Dill's role or cast him in the most unfavorable light possible.

Stewart Holbrook argued in The Columbia that O'Sullivan was the "father" of the dam, as did Murray Morgan in The Dam.¹²⁸ Morgan explained O'Sullivan organized the various advocates of the project into an effective alliance. O'Sullivan, in fact, did more than that. He was the heart of the project throughout much of the 1920's, the one who kept the dam alive and the one who had the knowledge to put the dam over when Dill needed it. If Murray, Holbrook, and Sundborg had also explained Dill's role, their praise of O'Sullivan would not have distorted the history of the dam.

Fortunately, Charles LeWarne and Robert Ficken have begun to balance the historiography of the battle for Grand Coulee. They credit Dill, however briefly, with leading the fight at the crucial stage.¹²⁹ The truth of the Ficken and LeWarne thesis lies in the documents presented above. Clarence Dill was the key figure in the fight for Grand Coulee Dam in 1933 and 1934. Had it not been for Dill's work and influence with the President, the dam's opponents -Ickes among them - might well have moved FDR to delay the dam in spite of his own desire to build it. But Dill would have had little with which to impress the President, had it not been for the countless hours of work devoted to the project over the previous fifteen years. Even the fight between the pumpers and gravity plan supporters had

¹²⁸Stewart Holbrook, The Columbia (New York: Rinehart, 1956), 307-8. Murray Morgan, The Dam (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 30. Both Holbrook and Morgan are more circumspect in their praise of O'Sullivan than Sundborg. Nevertheless both writers credit O'Sullivan with playing the leading role in the project and neglect Dill.

¹²⁹Ficken and LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History, 119-120.

not been entirely in vain, as it allowed a consensus to form for Grand Coulee, even in Spokane.

There were several men without whom the project would have been difficult to achieve; three were essential, James O'Sullivan, Clarence Dill, and Franklin Roosevelt. The efforts of these men, and those of their supporting cast, place the myth of the West's individualist base in stark contrast to reality. In spite of their differences, these men cooperated to help build the West. Moreover, the building of Grand Coulee Dam is one of the key developments in the region's history. For Grand Coulee Dam and the dams which followed provide the power for the modern Pacific Northwest.

A MAN IN THE MIDDLE

The Great Depression: seldom has the name of an era more accurately reflected the mind of the people who lived through it. It evokes an image of a starless night, dark, eternal, hopeless. American's were enduring the fourth winter of hard times as they waited for Franklin Roosevelt to take office in 1933. Thirteen million people were unemployed, farmers were near revolt, the banking system was crumbling, and a vocal minority espoused the panacea of communism. The President-elect negotiated the troubled seas of transition with uncommon grace, refusing to compromise the politics of experimentation that had brought him to the hour of trial. He remarked to Dan Roper, secretary of commerce, "Let's concentrate upon one thing, save the people and the nation, and if we have to change our minds twice every day to accomplish that end, we should do it."¹

Though he was prepared to sow new solutions, FDR was not unaware that failure reaped human misery. Eleanor Roosevelt related to him the story of Lorena Hickock who had been working for Harry Hopkins:

She got into one of those mining towns and came around a corner of an alley and started to walk up the alley. There was a group of miners sitting in front of the shacks, and they pulled down their caps over their faces. As soon as she caught site of that she walked up and said, 'What is the matter? What are you pulling your caps down for?' They said, 'Oh, it is alright.' 'It is a sort of custom to pull caps down because so many of the women have not enough clothes to cover them.'²

In the first year of his administration, FDR confronted the banking crisis, the farm problem, business regulation, and a host of assorted ills. Still, the unemployed and the hungry faced another winter of deprivation. Harry Hopkins

¹Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order: 1919-1933 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), 455.

²Freidel, A Rendezvous With Destiny, 132.

advised the President that some effort had to be made to meet the basic needs of those who could not help themselves. FDR, on humanitarian grounds, agreed, though he worried about the deleterious effect deficit spending would have on the economy. Hopkins organized the Civil Works Administration in nearly miraculous time as winter descended upon the country, and in so doing alleviated the suffering of millions. As a bi-product, the economy was somewhat improved in the spring of 1934.

For their part, Americans responded to the Depression as if they had lost at love: they tried to forget their misfortune. In so doing they sought to drown their sorrows in weak beer, and distract their minds in cheap movie houses. Clark Gable strode across the silver screen making women weak and men jealous, while Claudette Colbert held up traffic with a single leg. Nor had the nation forgotten the national pastime; Americans went to baseball parks in droves to watch the greats of the game, now legends: Dizzy Dean dazzled batters with his fast ball, and charmed the nation with his country humor. Once he placed a block of ice on home plate and claimed it was to cool off his fast ball. Lou Gehrig appeared in 2,130 straight games for the New York Yankees, symbolizing the toughness of Americans, and endlessly irritating the hapless Boston Red Sox. While the nation enjoyed a rousing chorus of "take me out to the ball game," other forms of music came into favor. The thirties saw the birth of the big band sound of Tommy Dorsey, Glen Miller, and a number of others. People flocked to dances, and dance marathons helped the weary to forget troubles.

If going to a dance were not possible, well, there was always the radio. Less than two decades old, the radio was the center of entertainment in the homes of most Americans. Sports, popular music, educational programs, gardening programs, agricultural reports, classical music, drama, and comedy came over the

air right into American living rooms. Most stations of the thirties tried to provide a little bit of everything.³ The idea of playing a single kind of music endlessly was one misery spared the people of the 1930's. To paraphrase a line from a still popular 1939 movie, they also had one thing we do not have: Will Rogers. Rogers' common sense humor kept Americans laughing at themselves, at their government, and most importantly, at the Depression. His words of wisdom and humor came to Americans through newspapers and over radio. Indeed, it was over radio that the nation heard the voice of calm assurance and hope.

Franklin Roosevelt used radio to reach the people in a manner never before tried, or since equaled. He provided a mental image to listeners of a caring fatherly figure sitting fireside, books on the wall, while explaining the intricacies of government in terms factory workers, farmers, and housewives could all understand. Radio was the key to Roosevelt's bond with the American people. It was through radio that Roosevelt led public opinion, explained policies, calmed fears, and directed energies.

It was no wonder then, that the regulation of radio - seemingly facing the constant threat of monopoly - became a goal of the Roosevelt administration in 1934. As it so happened, one of FDR's staunchest supporters, Clarence Dill, was chairman of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, the body which would guide the Senate version of FDR's communication act. As we shall see, Dill was the primary figure in the Roosevelt administration's fight for communications reform. In order to fully appreciate his role, it is necessary to digress into a summary of the developments in radio between 1927 and 1934.

³After having examined several programming schedules I believe this generalization is accurate. New York Times, 14 March 1928, 19. *Ibid.*, 10 March 1934, 27.

After the Radio Act of 1927 went into operation and the Federal Radio Commission began to function, radio entered a phase of growth which pleased many and alarmed some. From 1927 to 1934 it is not too much to say that commercial broadcasting came into its own and dominated the medium. It did so with no little help from the FRC. Robert McChesney, a historian of communications in this period, demonstrated this growth nicely when he cited the expansion of the two broadcasting networks in the nineteen twenties and thirties. Taken together the networks accounted for nearly "thirty percent" of American radio stations by 1933.⁴ In addition, the purpose of broadcasting was undergoing fundamental change in this period. This phenomenon was brought on by the discovery that advertising could make radio stations extremely profitable. Consequently, already scarce frequency space became even more valuable, putting economic pressure on non-profit broadcasters to sell their interests to commercial broadcasters.

Non-profit broadcasters faced other pressures as well. The FRC interpreted the 1927 Radio Act's use of the phrase "public convenience and necessity" to mean that it was to consider a station's programming in determining whether to renew a license.⁵ The commission further ruled the above phrase meant that it was to ensure programming which served the interests of the broadest number of people. Consequently, the commission began denying license renewals to stations with limited audiences such as religious organizations and educational institutions, especially when such stations were the only broadcasters

⁴Robert McChesney, "Senator C. C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934" (Paper submitted to Broadcast Education Association, 1987), 5.

⁵Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 38.

in their area. In metropolitan regions, limited interest non-profit stations generally were allowed, since stations serving the broader public interest were in existence.⁶

In 1929 the FRC committed the above policy to writing and expanded on its meaning for religious and educational stations:

There is not room in the broadcast band for every school of thought, religious, political, social, and economic, each to have its separate broadcasting frequency, its mouthpiece in the ether. If franchises are extended to some it gives them an unfair advantage over others, and results in a corresponding cutting down of general public service stations.⁷

It did not take long for those denied licenses under the FRC's ruling to claim their right of free speech had been violated, but the courts ruled in favor of the FRC.⁸ The FRC's decision regarding channel allocation resulted in a fairly rapid drop in non-profit radio stations. In 1925 there were 171 educational stations and a substantial number of religious broadcasters. In 1934 there were only 35 educational stations and 19 religious broadcasters.⁹ Clearly, the economics of radio combined with the FRC's policies were resulting in the demise of non-profit radio.

This situation gave rise to a vocal group of diverse people who were concerned that non-profit radio, or at least education and religious programming on general interest stations, survive. Their hopes lay in legislation which would direct the FRC to consider the interests of these broadcasters and their listeners in allocating licenses. Naturally, the concerns of these people, and the growing debate over the direction American broadcasting was taking, reached the ears of

⁶Ibid., 40, 41.

⁷Ibid., 40.

⁸Ibid.

⁹McChesney, "Senator C. C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934," 5.

the senior senator from Washington, chairman of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, and the Senate's recognized expert on radio legislation, Clarence Dill. Thus the interests of non-profit broadcasters coincided with the desires of the President to reform communication law in 1934 - which is not to say they had the same reforms in mind. Of course, there were other pressures on the senator as he attempted to guide the President's communication bill through the Senate. Those pressures had been building for some time.

As early as February 1928, Dill had begun to grow concerned over the encroachment of network broadcasters on smaller stations. In hearings on the confirmation of O. H. Caldwell to the FRC, Dill complained chain broadcasters were often controlling the best channels at the optimum hours of the day. The senator added he was prepared to ask for additional legislation concerning this issue if the FRC did not address the problem.¹⁰ He did not follow through on his threat to chain broadcasters, but did secure the extension of the FRC - as he considered it preferable to Hoover's management of radio - for one more year as Coolidge predicted he would.¹¹

Rather than take on chain broadcasters, Dill was determined to do battle with the creation of his own making, the FRC. He was angry the FRC had sanctioned an unequal distribution of radio stations, in clear violation of what Dill believed Congress had intended. In short, the Northeast had too many stations while the rest of the nation, especially the West, was deprived. He argued the FRC must be in the control of "the great organizations of capital, . . . or else they

¹⁰New York Times, 4 February 1928, 6.

¹¹Congressional Record (6 February 1928), vol. 69, pt. 3, 2563.

have no desire to carry out the law."¹² Far from being bound by the Radio Act of 1927, which was the standard commission response to critics, Dill argued the commissioners were flaunting it.¹³ Indeed the relationship between the members of the FRC and radio's businessmen could be very close. Henry Bellows was one of the first commissioners of the regulatory agency. He became a vice president of CBS shortly after leaving the FRC.¹⁴

The fight over redistribution of radio stations took an ironic turn when the House proposed legislation to rectify the problem which Dill believed was too drastic. The House bill would have directed the FRC to, ". . . allocate wavelengths to the various states according to population."¹⁵ Dill's objection centered around the fact that the House's language would have meant some stations in the Northeast would have been closed. He believed this unnecessary since the problem had more to do with power allocation than number of stations. In other words, the problem could be more easily rectified by reducing the power of some northeastern stations thus creating clear frequencies in areas of the country sufficiently removed from those stations. It was not necessary to close the northeastern stations to do this. The conference report eventually followed Dill's thinking and became law in April of 1928 (Davis Amendment).¹⁶

But what does equal distribution of radio stations on a regional basis have

¹²Congressional Record (27 February 1928), vol. 69, pt. 4, 3599.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Barnouw, History of Broadcasting in the United States, 247.

¹⁵New York Times, 14 March 1928, 19.

¹⁶Ibid., Congressional Record (22 March 1928), vol. 69, pt. 5, 5158. Ibid., (24 March 1928), 5293. New York Times, 22 April 1928, sec. 10, 19.

to do with non-profit radio? Simply this, the more frequencies or watts available in a region, the more likely it was for a non-profit station to survive. Dill made this point clear in January 1929 when he used as an example the diminishing of Chicago labor station WCFL's wattage in 1928.

Dill also took shots at the FRC's limited definition of public interest and necessity:

What is the 'public interest necessity and convenience' which the law fixes as the sole test for granting radio licenses? Certainly it is the same as the 'public welfare.' That which contributes to the health, comfort, and happiness of the people is in the public interest. That which provides wholesome entertainment, increases knowledge, arouses individual thinking, inspires noble impulses, strengthens human ties, breaks down hatreds, encourages respect for law is in the public interest. That which aids employment, improves the standard of living, and adds to the peace and content of mankind is in the public interest.

Is it in the public interest, necessity, and convenience that this marvelous means of communication should be placed within the control of a few great corporations?¹⁷

He further pointed out that the FRC's definition of public interest was so warped it took WCFL off the air in the evening, the only time labor would have access to radio.¹⁸ If Dill had become a tool of radio's money changers, as some students of radio contend, he must have been a disappointing purchase. Not content to mouth words, Dill initiated legislation which would place a cap on the wattage (10,000) of any one station.¹⁹ However, it was common knowledge that Dill's wattage restriction amendment did not have the necessary support in either

¹⁷Congressional Record (7 January 1929) vol. 70, pt. 2, 1239.

¹⁸New York Times, 8 January 1929, 40.

¹⁹Ibid., 5 December 1928, 27. Congressional Record (5 December 1928), vol. 70, pt. 1, 54.

house to pass, and even if it did "perform the miracle" and get to Coolidge's desk the President was determined to veto it.²⁰ Dill's wattage restriction was not part of the Radio Bill of March 1929 which extended the life of the commission for one more year.²¹ Opposition from conservatives was just too strong and their arguments had no trouble getting into print shrouded in the most self-serving verbiage.²² In spite of this opposition the Washington Post believed radio's Senate expert was determined to pursue wattage restrictions and would run directly into "the so called radio trust" in the effort.²³

In March 1929, Senator Dill addressed radio's problems on several fronts. He indicated his desire to bring comprehensive communications legislation before Congress in 1930.²⁴ He was also contemplating radio legislation which would fix advertising rate schedules.²⁵ Nor did Dill let up on the FRC. He attacked the commission for allowing "monopolization" of the air at the expense of smaller broadcasters. Specifically, he lambasted the FRC for creating "cleared" channels (a cleared channel was one which only a single station in the entire country could use). Thirty eight out of forty existing cleared channels went to network stations at the expense of small and non-profit broadcasters. In his fight against cleared

²⁰Washington Post, 16 December 1928, radio section, 1.

²¹New York Times, 3 March 1929, 18.

²²Washington Post, 14 December 1928, 12. According to Clifford Estey, Assistant to the President of Crosley Radio Corporation, station owners ran their stations solely as a public service and routinely lost huge sums of money in the process. Ibid.

²³Ibid., 16 December 1928, radio section, 1.

²⁴New York Times, 10 March 1929, sec. 11, 17. Ibid., 17 March 1929, sec. 10, 23.

²⁵Ibid., 24 March 1929, sec. 11, 21.

channels, and for equal distribution of stations, Dill specifically had the interests of non-profit broadcasters in mind.²⁶ He was also advancing the interests of the West which would have benefited from the reduction in the number of cleared channels through an increase in the number of radio stations in the region.

In this fight for the West and non-profit broadcasters Dill criticized the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia in February 1929 when it ruled that General Electric's radio station WGY of Schenectady, New York should not be required to share time with station KGO of Oakland, California. This decision recreated a cleared channel on the frequency the two stations had shared since the previous November when the FRC, following the dictates of the Davis amendment, had tried to spread stations more equitably around the country. In commenting on the WGY decision the senator argued that the court had been unduly impressed with General Electric's counsel, Charles Evans Hughes. Dill also made the point that Hughes was representative of the quality of counsel the "radio trust" could afford, therefore the FRC must be continued and funded to the extent required in its battle with radio's big business.²⁷

Radio's businessmen were not content with court victories over the Davis amendment; they also attacked the law in the press. A private investigation of the cleared channel issue sponsored by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association argued that merely reducing wattage, eliminating some cleared channels, and spreading stations around the country would not provide the best

²⁶Congressional Record (29 May 1929), vol. 71, pt. 2, 2185. *Ibid.*, (21 September 1929), vol. 71, pt. 4, 3835.

²⁷Washington Post, 26 February 1929, 5. The resolution which extended the life of the FRC included authorization of a general counsel and three assistants, clearly an effort to beef up the legal capabilities of the commission. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1928, 4.

radio service to Americans; it would be far better to repeal the Davis amendment and create more cleared channels.²⁸

In supporting extension of the FRC Dill was not suggesting he was satisfied with the commission's work, though he found some of its members more philosophically acceptable than others, only that he saw it as the best of the alternatives.²⁹ For he now argued that if the FRC did not begin to regulate radio as Congress envisioned, the public would demand a government-run system such as Canada's. Dill cautioned against such a development; however, then reminded the nation of the proposal, which the friends of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) had advanced, to combine RCA's overseas stations with ITT. Dill argued such companies were threatening to monopolize radio.³⁰ The senator was attempting to create a position between those who would allow radio's business interests to run the medium and those who wanted government ownership of radio. Since he advocated private ownership with substantial government regulation, neither extreme viewed him with much warmth; each thought him a tool of the other side.³¹

As the 1920's gave way to the thirties, Dill continued to fight for an FRC that would truly regulate radio, while he opposed radio's tendency toward

²⁸Ibid., 15 December 1928, 12.

²⁹Ibid., 14 December 1928, 12.

³⁰New York Times, 22 September 1929, 12. Ibid., 13 October 1929, sec. 10, 18. In December of 1928 the Federal Trade Commission dismissed its five year old suit against RCA and seven other companies on the grounds that it lacked jurisdiction. The FTC had contended that these companies had illegally restrained trade. Washington Post, 20 December 1928, 4.

³¹Congressional Record (21 November 1929), vol. 71, pt. 5, 5884.

monopoly. In December 1929, in spite of unhappiness with the FRC, he and Congressman Wallace White introduced legislation extending the life of the radio commission indefinitely, but also hoped to pass legislation which would force the commission to deal with the problem of monopoly in radio³² Indeed the primary fight over the Radio Bill of 1930 was whether or not the anti-monopoly features of the 1927 law should be discarded. In that fight, Dill was the leader of those who argued for retaining the 1927 radio act's strictures against communications monopoly, and for including the forfeiture of a license should a monopoly be proven. Opposition to such legislation came from radio's business interests such as RCA.³³ Colonel Manton Davis, vice president and general attorney of RCA, argued vigorously against Dill's proposal before the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee.³⁴

While the anti-monopoly features of the 1927 radio act were not modified, support in Congress for more severe anti-trust legislation was minimal. Prevailing attitude amongst legislators was that the Couzens Communications bill, which sought to bring all aspects of communication under one regulatory agency, would be the best method of dealing with communications problems.³⁵ But the Couzens bill, which eventually included stronger anti-trust language, frightened the broadcast industry and never entertained enough support to become law.³⁶

³²New York Times, 7 December 1929, 15.

³³Ibid., 22 September 1929, 12.

³⁴Ibid., 17 December 1929, 34.

³⁵Variety, 1 January 1930, 57.

³⁶Ibid., 9 April 1930, 74. Robert McChesney, Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle For Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-

Moreover, Dill's patience with the FRC was growing thin.³⁷ In January 1930, he accused the commission of ignoring the Davis Amendment, saying:

I would like to know the legerdemain whereby a law passed to assure equalization has left the power allotments as uneven as they were before.³⁸

Frustrated as Dill was with the work of the commission, he recognized the political realities of the time and compromised on the makeup of the commission with the Republican administration. He was content with two of the five commissioners being in general agreement with his views, one swing commissioner, and two who favored the networks.³⁹

Dill was aware of the sentiment among some people in the country for a government-owned radio system. He used the possibility of such a system as a threat against those who would monopolize the industry. But he had been to Europe on several occasions and studied the European system, while listening to Europeans complain about it. His preference for the American system was thus strengthened. However, he argued for privately owned radio from a unique perspective. Dill believed the listening tax in Europe was too high and constituted a hardship on the poor. He said:

. . . poor people on the other side of the Atlantic object to the listening tax as too high. Radio should be free to all . . . the air belongs to all the people and radio programs that are transmitted through it should be available to everybody. If the government collected a listener's fee, it would immediately begin to try to control programs and that would mean

1935 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 127.

³⁷New York Times, 17 December 1929, 24. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1929, 36. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1930, 1. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1930, 8.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 11 January 1930, 22.

³⁹Congressional Record (21 February 1930), vol. 72, pt. 3, 4064.

radio here.⁴⁰

In early 1932 Dill offered or supported several amendments to the Radio Act of 1927. In January he introduced legislation which would have reduced the right-of-way "clear" channels enjoyed to 2,300 miles, thus opening a number of channels in the West and making diverse programming more likely.⁴¹ In February he discussed limiting the number of stations one corporation or individual could own, and he also advocated the institution of fees for licenses in order to make the industry pay for its own regulation.⁴² Finally, Dill, along with Senator James Couzens of Michigan (R), began calling for restrictions on the amount of time stations could devote to advertising.⁴³ Indeed the seemingly incessant advertising on radio, a phenomenon which had only grown worse since the inception of the FRC, was probably of greater interest to the public than the other issues which troubled the new industry. Abuse of advertising was raising enough criticism that those fighting for non-profit radio used the issue to raise sympathy for their cause.⁴⁴

In an effort to deal with the various complaints about radio, and especially in response to the pleading for control of advertising, Dill and Couzens called on the FRC to prepare a report on the state of the industry.⁴⁵ Opposition to Dill's

⁴⁰New York Times, 14 June 1931, 29.

⁴¹Ibid., 16 January 1932, 12.

⁴²Ibid., 18 February 1932, 24. Ibid., 12 December 1932, sec. 8, 6. Congressional Record (14 April 1932), vol. 75, pt. 8, 8179. Ibid., (16 December 1933), vol. 76, pt. 1, 542.

⁴³New York Times, 14 June 1931, 29.

⁴⁴The Nation, 22 August 1934, 201. Ibid., 27 September 1933, 340.

⁴⁵Congressional Record (16 June 1932), vol. 75, pt. 12, 13121.

effort to regulate advertising came from radio's businessmen and, of course, advertising agencies.⁴⁶ They were a persuasive group. When the FRC issued its report, it cited the fact that only 6 1/2% of air time was devoted to advertising and recommended government not interfere with that aspect of radio.⁴⁷ But FRC's report did not stop Dill from calling for limits on radio advertising and criticizing the FRC for failing to allocate more air time for small or independent stations.⁴⁸

Nor did Dill forget about his idea to have broadcasters pay for their own regulation. He was not happy with the fact that the regulation of broadcasting cost the federal government over \$700,00 in 1933. Consequently he proposed that the government institute a system of broadcasting license fees which would raise the revenue necessary to cover the cost of regulation.⁴⁹ In this effort the senator was again opposed by radio's vested interests. Henry Bellows, vice president of CBS, appeared before the subcommittee and argued that broadcasters simply could not afford the fees. Dill engaged Bellows in a lengthy cross examination which clearly delineated the differences of opinion concerning radio the two men held.⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Dill's licensing scheme the necessity of holding hearings required dropping the licensing fee amendment from the radio bill of 1933.⁵¹ Even had

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., (10 February 1933), vol. 76, pt. 4,5, 3764-3770, 5203-5204, 5212. New York Times, 27 December 1933, 7.

⁴⁹Congressional Record (16 December 1932), vol. 76, pt. 1, 542. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Interstate Commerce, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. 5201, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session, January 1933, 3-4.

⁵⁰Ibid., 34-43.

⁵¹Congressional Record (16 December 1932), vol. 76, pt. 1, 542.

Dill's ideas survived the legislative process in 1933, it would have made no difference. President Hoover vetoed the 1933 Radio Bill, which contained the essential concept of a comprehensive communications commission eventually adopted in 1934. Those who would strengthen government regulation of radio then, faced their greatest challenge from the right, as most of Dill's efforts to strengthen and direct the FRC were defeated from that quarter. Radio's big businessmen usually saw eye to eye with the Republican administration of Herbert Hoover, but were very suspicious of the man who would become President in March of 1933: FDR.⁵²

Though Hoover vetoed the radio bill of 1933 it is worth noting that Dill had managed to include in that bill an amendment odious to business, and another which would have brought better radio service to the sparsely populated region he called home: the West. Business objected in vain to the Washingtonian's idea to give the FRC power to levy fines for violations of various radio regulations. Senator Wallace White (R) of Maine, the co-author of the 1927 Radio Act as a member of the House, led the fight to get the fines removed from the 1933 bill. Dill prevailed.⁵³ Clarence's idea to provide the West with better radio service took advantage of the vast distances often separating the small towns of the region. Dill argued that licensing stations of 100 watts would not interfere with the frequencies of stations already in existence, especially in regions which had too few stations anyway. The signals of such small stations would not travel more than a few miles, thus serving only local inhabitants. Approving Dill's idea required waiving the Davis amendment of 1928 in regard to these small stations. Congress agreed,

⁵²Barnouw, History of Broadcasting in the United States, 264, 273.

⁵³Congressional Record (28 February 1933), vol. 76, pt. 5, 5207. *Ibid.*, 5212.

but Hoover did not.⁵⁴

The discussion concerning government-owned stations versus private radio was a minor development in comparison to the arguments generated by disagreement over monopoly legislation. Nevertheless, Dill addressed it. He published an article in the Congressional Digest in which he argued the American way of regulating the airwaves was superior to the government-owned European way.⁵⁵ Dill extolled the virtues of the 1927 Radio Act, especially its refusal to allow private enterprise to accrue vested rights to a frequency. He implied that whatever abuses existed were not primarily the fault of the law, but of the FRC which - though it held broad powers - did not act in the public interest.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Dill was firmly on the "American way" side, and thus those favoring a state owned system considered him an opponent, no different and no better than those who would monopolize the industry.

As we have seen, from 1927 to 1934 Dill proposed significant legislation which would have given the federal government greater power in regulating radio, and brought better, more diverse radio both to the US as a whole and to the West in particular. The primary issues in this period were the extent to which chain broadcasters would be allowed to dominate the medium, and the complaints the abuse of advertising was generating amongst radio listeners. A secondary issue

⁵⁴Ibid., 5204, 5212. There seems to be much confusion amongst broadcasting historians concerning White's congressional career. He served in the House from 4 March 1917 to 3 March 1931; elected to the Senate in 1932, he served in that capacity until January 1949.

⁵⁵Clarence Dill, "Should the United States Adopt the British System of Radio Control?" The Congressional Digest 12 (August-September 1933): 194, 196.

⁵⁶Ibid.

was the struggle amongst non-profit broadcasters to retain a niche in the industry. Dill sought legislation which would have restricted the networks and made it easier for non-profit broadcasters to survive. Specifically, he sought to balance the number of stations and the wattage of stations throughout the country, thus making more frequencies available to broadcasters. Secondly, he sought to limit the right of way of "cleared" channels which again would have provided more frequencies to broadcasters. Finally, he sought to limit the number of stations any group of broadcasters could own, thus opening the medium to more voices.

As noted above, Dill's efforts fell victim to the opposition of radio's businessmen and ultimately Hoover's pocket veto in early March 1933. But by 1934 there was a new attitude in the White House toward radio. In that year President Roosevelt asked Dill, Secretary of Commerce Roper, and Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas (chairman of the House Committee on Interstate Commerce) to prepare legislation combining all communications commissions under one authority.⁵⁷

On 10 February 1934 Dill met with the President and Representative Rayburn. The three men decided to pursue a combination of the various commissions, but to leave in-tact the governing statutes which had directed those commissions. The new FCC bill was to be a housekeeping measure, not a re-invention of government responsibility for communications. Dill explained the President's purpose in proposing the new commission:

It is far wiser . . . to let the proposed commission have power to make these studies than try to have Congress legislate on intricate and complex aspects of the communications program at this time. My idea is simply to bestow the present authority of the ICC and the radio commission upon the new set-up. Existing law is all the power necessary

⁵⁷New York Times, 11 January 1934, 29.

to give at this time . . . if we leave out the controversial matters the bill can be passed at this session of Congress, otherwise it cannot.⁵⁸

Dill's comment concerning the leaving out of "controversial matters" reflected more wishful thinking than reality as the bill contained much that generated controversy. But it is true that framers of the Communications Act of 1934 did set out to avoid controversy as Dill suggested: no new laws regarding monopoly were included - the most inflammatory issue in broadcasting since the 1927 Radio Act. Moreover, the supporters of the legislation, Roosevelt among them, contemplated no further safeguards for non-profit broadcasters.⁵⁹ Dill and Rayburn introduced communications bills to their respective houses on 27 February 1934.⁶⁰ Both men expected fairly quick passage as the legislation was similar to the thrust of the New Deal in other areas: banking, commerce, securities, etc. That thrust was essentially an effort to save the capitalist system, under attack from both left and right, through government regulation.⁶¹

Though Dill and Rayburn hoped for minimal opposition, radio's businessmen opposed the measure, especially Dill's version which repealed the Radio Act of 1927.⁶² But Rayburn, who thought himself something of a conservative, also received what he considered inordinate pressure from radio's businessmen to leave well enough alone. Rayburn's biographers wrote, "the wrath of conservative business interests fell upon Rayburn as he fought in committee and

⁵⁸Ibid., 10 February 1934, 12.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., 28 February 1934, 8.

⁶¹William Leuchtenberg, Franklin Roosevelt And The New Deal (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), 24-25, 248, 275-277.

⁶²New York Times, 10 March 1934, 27.

on the House floor for the administration's plan to create an FCC."⁶³ If radio's magnates did not appreciate Rayburn then their attitude toward Dill must have approached loathing. For the Dill bill was widely regarded as being much more harsh than the Rayburn measure.⁶⁴ If Dill had gotten his way Congress would have provided the FCC with highly restrictive guidelines on broadcasting rates; Rayburn's bill merely required that those rates "should be just and reasonable."⁶⁵ Henry A. Bellows, Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the National Broadcasters Association, castigated the bill for going far beyond the President's intent. No doubt the act did go beyond the President's published intent. Roosevelt was usually content to let others take the political heat when possible. Moreover, Bellows opposed repeal of the 1927 Act - an aspect of Dill's legislation - because that law had created a number of court cases, the results of which provided broadcasters sure grounds of operation. In addition, Bellows believed repeal of the 1927 law would necessarily place an enormous amount of power in the hands of the new commissioners. He also criticized the act's proposed limitation of licenses to one year, the idea of increasing fines for rules violations, the requirement to make available equal time for any person wishing to speak on behalf of a political candidate, and the restriction of the right to appeal commission decisions.⁶⁶ Bellows was particularly upset with Dill's proposal to place more than

⁶³D.B. Hardeman and Donald Bacon, Rayburn: A Biography (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987), 160. Alfred Steinberg came to the same conclusion in his biography of Rayburn. Alfred Steinberg, Sam Rayburn (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975), 119.

⁶⁴Ibid. Hardeman and Bacon, Rayburn: A Biography, 160.

⁶⁵Steinberg, Sam Rayburn, 119.

⁶⁶New York Times, 10 March 1934, 27. Variety, 13 March, 1934, 39.

one station on cleared channels.⁶⁷ It is important to note that all of the above ideas had been on Dill's agenda for some time, many of them were in the radio bill of 1933.

William S. Paley, head of the Columbia Broadcasting System, also fired broadsides at the administration's communications bill. He argued that the industry had "proved itself capable in the few years of its existence of regulating itself and the medium could go on working out its own problems in the public interest without having the 'throttling hands of a too rigorous regulation laid upon it.'" Paley went on in an effort to stake out the moral high ground for the broadcast industry:

Columbia has persistently, despite 'temptations of added revenue' declined to take programs which it felt would be contrary to the public interest. The public would be astonished if it knew of the income sacrificed by the leading broadcast enterprises in the interest of good taste, good morals, and honest business.⁶⁸

Irritated that his legislation was being characterized by Paley, Bellows and others like them as unnecessary censorship, Dill responded saying, "there isn't any foundation either in theory or in fact for such an idea."⁶⁹

Nor were those interested in other aspects of communications silent. Walter Gifford, president of American Telephone and Telegraph Company, charged the new bill created "government management" of communications, not regulation. He too feared the new commission would wield too much power. There was a veritable parade of witnesses before the Senate Interstate Commerce

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 6 March 1934, 44.

⁶⁹Ibid., 13 March 1934, 39.

Committee with similar views.⁷⁰ So hostile was business to the Communications Act that Dill found most of the Democrats on the Interstate Commerce Committee were being pressured to oppose the bill.⁷¹ Indeed the opposition to the bill was so intense that Variety predicted in April that the chances of passing the legislation were nil.⁷²

Dill responded to Gifford, and the pressure his Senate colleagues were feeling, with that time honored Senate tradition - threat of an investigation of AT&T. The New York Times captured the essence of Dill's remarks:

Senator Dill said that during hearings on his bill he had become particularly interested in the nature of contracts binding its numerous subsidiaries to the top company of the Bell system. He cited the testimony of Walter Gifford . . . that it might prove ruinous to the company to have a federal commission, such as the administration proposes, delving into its many private transactions.⁷³

Nevertheless, pressure from the radio businessmen had an effect on Dill's legislation. He described it:

It is a good bill . . . while it does not go as far in regulating as the original draft, it is probably better to leave some of those things for further study.

Telephone monopoly has grown-up without regulation. This is the beginning of actual regulation in the public interest of the corporations that are bound together as parent, subsidiary, and affiliate.⁷⁴

The New York Times further observed that pressure from communications

⁷⁰New York Times, 14 March 1934, 27.

⁷¹Dill, Where Water Falls, 193-194.

⁷²Variety, 17 April 1934.

⁷³New York Times, 16 March 1934, 1.

⁷⁴Ibid., 14 April 1934, 7.

businessmen had resulted in many provisions being "sharply modified."⁷⁵ The senator did not relish the changes, but acquiesced in order to pass the legislation. Even then, Variety - an industry mouthpiece - trumpeted the expected death of Dill's radio bill with the end of the current legislative session.⁷⁶ However, he was able to bring the bill to the Senate floor and argued for its passage, primarily because it would finally bring regulation to the "telephone monopoly."⁷⁷

Dill now proposed to play hardball with AT&T. He made good on his threat to seek a Senate investigation of the communications giant. His purpose was clear:

If Congress fails to pass the communications bill, this investigation will furnish necessary facts upon which to base legislation with broader powers over communications at the next session. If Congress passes the communications bill we should make this investigation anyhow to furnish to Congress further information which the commission will not have time to secure . . .⁷⁸

The last half of Dill's declaration was pure posturing: he had no intention of pursuing the investigation if Congress were allowed to pass the communications act. If, however, opposition remained strong, the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee would conduct the investigation; Dill was the chairman.

While Dill was busy fighting critics of his bill from the business sector, church and educational groups, with the help of many journalists and intellectuals, agitated for assurances that their place in radio would be protected or expanded. With the aid of Senator Henry D. Hatfield (R) of West Virginia, a vociferous critic

⁷⁵Ibid., Variety, 8 May 1934, 37,45.

⁷⁶Ibid., 17 April 1934, 33.

⁷⁷New York Times, 20 April 1934, 6.

⁷⁸Ibid., 27 April 1934, 16.

of the New Deal, and Senator Robert F. Wagner (D) of New York, non-profit broadcasters had brought before the Senate an amendment to the communications act which called for 25 percent of a station's air time to be reserved for special interest programming.⁷⁹ While the complaints of these groups had not been a major issue in broadcasting, they had formed organizations devoted to promoting the interests of non-profit broadcasters in the early thirties (National Committee on Education by Radio and the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education).⁸⁰ There were two groups because they differed in method. NCER preferred non-profit broadcasters own their stations, and NACRE advocated mandating commercial broadcasters provide time for special interest programming.⁸¹ By 1934 the concerns of non-profit broadcasters were receiving significant play in newspapers and periodicals.⁸²

Meanwhile, the Rayburn version of the communications act, which lacked the more radical features of the Senate bill, received the endorsement of the NAB when Henry Bellows gave his stamp of approval.⁸³ The fight over radio would be waged in the Senate. Thus Clarence Dill would play the central role in reconciling the vastly different interests of the various groups concerned with radio and in shaping the final legislation.

Dill was not unsympathetic to the plight of non-profit broadcasters. In a

⁷⁹Variety, 8 May 1934, 37,45.

⁸⁰McChesney, "Senator C. C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934," 8-10.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Variety, 8 May 1934, 37,45.

⁸³Ibid., 15 May 1934, 38.

speech on the Senate floor he said:

The difficulty probably is in the failure of the present commission to take the steps that it ought to take to see to it that a larger use is made of radio facilities for educational and religious purposes.⁸⁴

Nor was he a pawn of radio's powerful businessmen. On 15 May, Dill introduced his bill to the Senate, explaining that though the document was lengthy, it essentially repealed the Radio Act of 1927, reenacted most of that legislation, instructed the new commission, provided some new regulatory powers, and most important, extended provisions of the Interstate Commerce Commission Act to cover telephone and telegraph regulation.⁸⁵

Immediately Senator Couzens of Michigan wanted to know if the anti-monopoly statute of the Radio Act of 1927 had been retained.⁸⁶ Dill assured him it had.⁸⁷ After consideration of a few other minor subjects, the Senate moved on to consideration of the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment.⁸⁸ While the broadcasting industry had become both concerned and incensed over the amendment, which would have provided 25 percent of a station's air time to religious, educational, labor, agricultural, and other similar non-profit associations, support for the bill was not strong. Both senators Dill and White, who had sponsored the 1927 Radio Act as a Representative in the House, argued against the amendment. The Wagner-Hatfield amendment was a direct rebuke of the FRC and its policy of denying licenses to special purpose stations in favor of the general public interest.

⁸⁴Congressional Record (15 May 1934), vol. 78, pt. 8, 8843.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 8822-8826.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 8854.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*,

Dill had also been critical of the FRC policy, but argued against Wagner-Hatfield because it would have required micro-management of radio by the commission - or Congress - and led to intractable discussions as to who or what qualified as a non-profit association.⁸⁹ Dill, however, included a provision in his bill which instructed the commission to study the problems of non-profit radio with an eye toward making adjustments in the future.⁹⁰ That report eventually recommended non-profit organizations seek expression through general interest radio.⁹¹

Senate discussion of the communications act was not lengthy. The Wagner-Hatfield amendment was defeated by a 42 to 23 vote. Dill's legislation passed by voice vote.⁹²

Communications historians have made more of Wagner-Hatfield than was ever made of it at the time. No doubt the banality of radio in the interceding years has prompted such attention. Philip Rosen, a radio historian, argues that Dill's proposal to study the non-profit issue probably stemmed the tide of sentiment for Wagner-Hatfield.⁹³ McChesney follows Rosen's argument.⁹⁴ But there was no rising tide in favor of Wagner-Hatfield. The Senate at this time, and for a good many years preceding, had a group who could be counted on to support almost

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 54-55.

⁹²Congressional Record (15 May 1934), vol. 78, pt. 8. Ibid., 8854.

⁹³Philip Rosen, The Modern Stentors: Radio Broadcasters and the Federal Government: 1920-1934 (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 179.

⁹⁴McChesney, "Senator C.C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934," 16, 21.

any measure which would ostensibly control big business. George Norris, William Borah, David Walsh, Burton Wheeler, and Gerald Nye represented this insurgent wing and all voted for Wagner-Hatfield, just as they had voted against the Radio Bill of 1927 when non-profit radio was not an issue.

In fact, those who expressed disapproval of the Radio Act of 1927, primarily on the grounds that it did not adequately reserve to the United States ownership of the ether, numbered 29 in 1927; those who voted for Wagner-Hatfield in the roll call vote numbered 23 in 1934. The issue voted on in 1927 was not synonymous with Wagner-Hatfield, but it was ideologically close enough to demonstrate that whatever sentiment there was for Wagner-Hatfield had more to do with long term ideological differences in the Senate, than with a specific concern for non-profit radio. Far from exhibiting a rising "tide" of concern about non-profit radio, Wagner-Hatfield had actually drawn less support than the opponents of the Radio Act of 1927 had garnered. I am not suggesting Norris et. al. were not serious about protecting non-profit radio, I am suggesting Rosen, and those who follow his argument, mistake a profound political difference amongst the various senators for rising support for non-profit radio.⁹⁵ Further damaging the rising tide theory was the fact that 31 senators were so disinterested in the Wagner-Hatfield amendment, they failed to even vote. Key Pittman, who had so strenuously opposed the Radio Act of 1927 was among those failing to voice an opinion on Wagner-Hatfield.⁹⁶ The House was even less interested in such

⁹⁵Many of those who voted against the Radio Act of 1927 did so because they preferred a government owned system, or because they believed the clause disallowing the accrual of vested interests by private enterprise of the air was not strong enough. Consequently, those senators generally supported the Wagner-Hatfield amendment.

⁹⁶Congressional Record (15 May 1934), vol. 78, pt. 8, 8846.

legislation.

In supporting Rosen's argument McChesney makes much of Variety's description as "panic" the National Association of Broadcasters efforts to defeat Wagner-Hatfield."⁹⁷ The magazine also predicted W-H had a 50-50 chance in the Senate. But Variety was well known as a mouthpiece of the broadcast industry and its purpose in the article seems much more to generate concern amongst complacent broadcasters - just in case - than to reflect actual apprehension.⁹⁸

In summary, Wagner-Hatfield was a very minor issue in 1934, it drew only modest attention from the press, and commanded very little of the Senate's time. Only the more radical or insurgent members of the Senate voted for it, just as many of the same senators had voted against the Radio Act of 1927.

Ironically, Dill himself was often counted among those insurgent senators, sometimes referred to as the "sons of the wild jackass."⁹⁹ But Dill had one quality that most of them lacked at one time or another; he knew what was possible and what was not, and was willing to work toward the possible. Modifying his idealism was a strain of practicality often associated with the West, and ironically lacking in many of its congressional representatives. Borah is the best example of this deficiency.¹⁰⁰

After Dill's communications bill passed the Senate it went to a conference

⁹⁷McChesney, "Senator C.C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934," 21.

⁹⁸Variety, 8 May, 1934. 37,45.

⁹⁹Ray Tucker, Sons of a Wild Jackass (Boston: L. C. Page and Company, 1932).

¹⁰⁰Leroy Ashby, The Spearless Leader: Senator Borah and the Progressive Movement in the 1920's (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 284-294.

committee to work out the differences between it and the Rayburn communications bill which had passed the House. As noted above, the Rayburn bill had received the approbation of Henry Bellows and radio's businessmen in general. Variety voiced the sentiment of these people in regard to the work of the conference committee when it declared, "Outlook is that the most obnoxious Senate amendments will go by the boards and the new act will correspond pretty much with existing legislation."¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, Variety believed Dill would put up a fight for the anti-monopoly and educational program clauses of his bill.¹⁰²

Unfortunately for Clarence Dill, Variety's prediction was fairly accurate. The Washingtonian could not get enough votes in conference to retain his stronger anti-monopoly language. In addition, the Senate provision calling for equal time for political candidates and their supporters was thrown out. And the educational and religious broadcasting issue was sidestepped by calling for the new commission to study the plight of such broadcasters. Rayburn's biographers described their subject's efforts in the conference committee, "Working against the pressure of adjournment, the Texan pressed the Senate to accept his version rather than a more stringent and, some thought, more punitive measure written by Senator C.C. Dill of Washington."¹⁰³ In short the votes for Dill's more stringent communications bill simply did not exist, especially not in the House where the conference committee's report sailed through with opposition only from those

¹⁰¹Variety, 5 June 1934, 35.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Hardeman and Bacon, Rayburn: A Biography, 160. The fact that Dill could not get his more strict version of the FCC in 1934 when his party controlled the government makes his accomplishments under previous Republican administrations seem all the more remarkable.

opposed to any new clauses concerning radio.¹⁰⁴

In spite of these defeats there was still cause for optimism. Dill had always believed that the real problem with radio was not the law - though he was willing to admit it had deficiencies - but the make-up of the commission. Consequently he now hoped a commission selected by FDR would regulate more justly than had those chosen by Calvin Coolidge or Herbert Hoover. There were viable reasons for retaining such hope. It was obvious then, as to later historians, that the FRC operated under intense pressure from radio's businessmen and their allies in Congress.¹⁰⁵ Dill believed that a new Democrat-controlled Congress combined with a sympathetic President would result in a changed political and social milieu which would give rise to a commission truly dedicated to regulating radio in the public interest. Perhaps this faith was naive; but it had yet to be tried in 1934.

Historians and other students of this period have criticized the *Washingtonian* for being a tool of the commercial interests. Robert McChesney questions not only Dill's political commitment to the public interest, but his integrity as well:

The events of 1934, on the other hand, clearly reveal Dill as the street fighting ring leader of the forces dedicated to preserving the private commercial status quo. I do not believe it unfair to question just how great Dill's commitment was, either in spirit or in practice, to whatever lofty principle has been deemed the 'public interest.'¹⁰⁶

However, McChesney's analysis is limited in scope and he offers no proof of an unethical relationship between Dill and radio's private interests. He appears to

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 12 June 1934, 39.

¹⁰⁵Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*, 272, 273.

¹⁰⁶McChesney, "Senator C. C. Dill and the Communications Act of 1934," 29.

know little of Dill's politics outside of radio legislation, and seems unconcerned about the political dynamics of the period. Though he qualifies his analysis of the 1934 act with the statement that, ". . . this opposition movement [the non-profit campaign] never constituted a serious threat to the status quo," his entire analysis of Dill focuses solely on the senator's relationship to the admittedly minor "opposition movement", thus completely ignoring Dill's own opposition to a group that was indeed formidable: the business interests of radio.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, McChesney's primary thesis is equally flawed. He seeks to demonstrate that scholars have failed to appreciate the significance of the Communications Act of 1934, because they see it as essentially a reenactment of the 1927 Radio Act. McChesney argues, "The Communication Act of 1934 is so important because it came after the full development of a private commercial system. People had an opportunity to see the future and to react accordingly."¹⁰⁸ Indeed, he formulates his thesis even more forcefully in the following, "I will argue that the really important legislation for broadcast history is the Communications Act of 1934." However, McChesney contradicts his own thesis. In his summary he states:

Many Congressman hardly considered the issue whatsoever [the Communications Act of 1934] - what with the huge body of New Deal legislation before them - and could easily have overlooked its implications for radio due to the legislation's broader scope. In 1934 as in 1927 a dominant attribute of the Congressional debate was the high level of confusion over the issue . . . In addition, the vast majority of the American people never had the slightest idea about what was transpiring in the spring of 1934 nor of its implication for American society. Therefore, I do not believe that it is unfair to conclude that there has never been a viable public debate in the United States over the control and structure of its

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 14, 29.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 27.

broadcasting services.¹⁰⁹

At the risk of being obvious and redundant, McChesney's thesis was the importance of the Communications Act of 1934 relative to the Radio Act of 1927. His own argument, quoted above, establishes the essential validity of the historians who have gone before him and disagreed with him. Moreover, the Supreme Court agreed with those historians when it decided the 1934 Communications Act, in regard to radio, had simply reenacted the 1927 radio law (Federal Communications Commission versus Pottsville Communications Company).¹¹⁰

Over the last twenty years historians have recognized Dill's role in the history of broadcast regulation. Their assessments have, on the whole, been positive as we have observed in regard to the Radio Act of 1927. However, it is going too far to call Dill's work a victory for progressivism as does Donald Godfrey.¹¹¹ At best Dill achieved a standoff with radio's wealthy and powerful business interests; indeed, he may have lost the battle.

On the other hand, writers like McChesney do not shed light on the period, or Dill's role in broadcasting history, when they focus too narrowly on one aspect of the conflict (the fight for non-profit radio). It does little good to castigate Dill for not achieving something that was never possible, something an astute politician would recognize as such and thus avoid. Dill fought for the public interest in regard to radio in areas he thought he could win: reducing the right of way of cleared channels, more equitable distribution of wattage throughout the country,

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 27.

¹¹⁰Rosenbloom, "Authority of the Federal Communications Commission," 52.

¹¹¹Donald Godfrey, "Senator Dill and the 1927 Radio Act," Journal of Broadcasting 23 (1978).

and safeguards against radio monopoly. All of these measures would have made diverse broadcasting more likely without inserting the federal government into the moment by moment operation of radio stations.

Nevertheless the impression lingers Dill might have agreed to more strict government regulation of radio in the interest of non-profit broadcasters had there been any hope Wagner-Hatfield might have passed. There was not. And because Dill recognized there was not and chose to create legislation, rather than merely oppose it, he has sometimes been criticized as being less than a progressive in regard to his radio work. This criticism is valid if by progressive one means someone who would rather be right and accomplish little like William Borah; but if by progressive one means someone who stands for a philosophy similar to Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number) then Dill - with his ability to compromise - was an effective progressive.¹¹² For clearly more Americans had better access to diverse radio programming as a result of the Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934 than would have been the case had radio's businessmen been allowed to create a broadcasting system controlled by a few powerful individuals.

It is instructive that Dill comes in for much of the same criticism as his choice for president in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote of FDR:

To the real radicals Roosevelt seemed at best warm-hearted but superficial, at worst glib and insincere, in any case hopelessly committed to the

¹¹²Leroy Ashby, The Spearless Leader: Senator Borah and the Progressive Movement in the 1920's (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 284-294. It is by no means my intent to imply Borah was always right, but believing he was he seldom compromised, and thus his biographer laments he accomplished little.

capitalist system.¹¹³

Neither Dill nor Roosevelt would have been offended at the last part of the above assessment.

¹¹³Schlesinger Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, 435.

SIGNING OFF

In the summer of 1934 Clarence Dill made a decision which drastically altered the rest of his life: he decided to retire from the US Senate. This decision, made as it was just after his success with Grand Coulee and so unusual for politicians who have risen to Dill's stature, is worth a detailed investigation and reveals much about him.

The senator had been an extremely busy man in the winter of 1933-1934. Between Grand Coulee and radio were sandwiched a number of lesser responsibilities. He continued to guide the Rosa Reclamation Project and the Skagit Dam while fighting for a railroad pension bill and a labor mediation bill.¹ The New Deal was a demanding task master, the Great Depression a hydra-like problem. The pace of life in Washington was little short of cruel as anyone associated with government often worked well into the night. Dill, a man who identified with place perhaps more than most men, longed for the solitude of a trout stream in the Kettle River Range. He also missed friendships which did not have politics as the common bond. He said on one occasion, "I find more of a neighborly spirit in the garage man and the small corner grocery man than I do in many of the people with whom I associate daily in the capital."²

In June 1934 Clarence mentioned to J. D. Ross his strong inclination to forgo reelection, though he hoped to finalize the Skagit Project before his term ended.³ Late in the month, he returned to Spokane and was surprised to find a

¹Spokesman-Review, 29 June 1934, n.p.

²Unidentified biographical sketch, CDP, Archives, EWSHS, Spokane.

³Clarence Dill to J. D. Ross, 29 June 1934, Seattle Lighting Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

large crowd waiting to meet him at the Northern Pacific station. The crowd had convened specifically to urge him to run for reelection. But Dill, in an impromptu speech, declared:

I am tired of the Senate. I am not physically tired but the Senate has lost its thrill for me. And when a job has lost its thrill, I feel it is time to get another one . . .

When I retire from the Senate I will make my home in Spokane . . . I landed in Spokane the first time in July 1908 and I decided right then I would make Spokane my home.⁴

The next day the Spokesman-Review, in an unexpected development worthy of Dickens, tried to persuade Dill his talents were indispensable. First the paper argued he was needed to ensure completion of Grand Coulee dam. Dill responded that the completion of the dam was up to Roosevelt, and he believed the President would build the high dam. Second, the paper remarked that as chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, the senator was in perfect position to cause the current fight over railroad rates to come out in Spokane's favor. He did not respond to that assertion.

Spokane's citizens were not content with the Dill's decision to retire. An organization formed to persuade him to run again. Their arguments were designed to appeal to the senator's sense of responsibility to the state. They argued that his talents were needed in Washington D.C. as part of the New Deal, that he owed public service to those who had supported him in previous campaigns, and that no statesman had more thoroughly "won the confidence of the people of the

⁴Spokesman-Review, 29 June 1934, n.p.

Northwest than has senator Dill."⁵ Even William La Follette, a former Republican colleague of Dill's in the House, urged him to seek a third term.⁶

Dill left for Seattle shortly after his arrival in Spokane, perhaps to get away from the well wishers. But positive receptions followed him into the Puget Sound country as well. Everywhere he went he was pressured to run but he refused to announce his candidacy.⁷ Finally, he made his decision both final and formal. In a radio address on 11 July 1934, he announced his decision to retire from the United States Senate. Dill told the people of Washington he was retiring because the Senate had a way of capturing a man for life, making him fit for only one role - senator. He went on to say he was retiring because he sincerely believed most politicians do not know when to quit. Furthermore, he was quitting when he was popular because he thought that preferable to the alternative and cautioned his listeners that though he was well liked now, these things have a way of changing. Dill also argued that the state confronted no pressing issue which mandated his return to the Senate. Then he criticized the political process, claiming he could not afford to mount Senate campaigns since he was not wealthy and campaigns had become so expensive. He further mentioned that he had begun to long for home and the joys of living in the Pacific Northwest. Finally, he admitted he had just had enough of public life.⁸

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Tacoma News Tribune, 6 July 1934, 1.

⁸Dill, Where Water Falls, 200. Text of radio speech, 11 July 1934, CDP. The Tacoma Times, 12 July 1934, 4.

The speech was not one of Dill's best. He was beginning to develop a habit of bombast, of extended historical allusions, in his oratory. The seeds of these problems had always been there, they often are for those who admire the spoken word; these oratorical problems would grow in later life and result in listener's perceptions of him being less than he deserved.

Dill also retired to make some money. He frankly confessed this fact in Where Water Falls saying to a group of supporters, "I have no money, and never will if I stay there [the senate]. What little I accumulate in six years, I spend in each campaign. That may sound materialistic but I don't want to be a broken down politician with no money in my old age."⁹ Dill's concern about money provides insight into his relationship with Rosalie in 1934.

While all of the above reasons probably played a part in Dill's decision to retire, there were two other major factors which no doubt fell under the category of the "personal reasons" which he cited in his memoirs.¹⁰ The first had to do with an old friend of Dill's, William E. Humphrey. On 25 July 1933, President Roosevelt asked for the resignation of Humphrey who sat on the Federal Trade Commission.¹¹ Humphrey had been a congressman from Washington state and a colleague of Dill's in the teens. Though he was a Republican, Dill helped him obtain his seat on the FTC in the mid-twenties. After receiving Roosevelt's request for his resignation, Humphrey wrote to Dill asking him to intercede on his behalf. He recalled to Dill their "many years of friendship" and the favors each had

⁹Dill, Where Water Falls, 200, 201.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 202.

¹¹Franklin Roosevelt to William Humphrey, 25 July 1933, William E. Humphrey Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

previously done the other.¹² Meanwhile, Humphrey asked the President for time in which to put his affairs in order. FDR agreed to give him two-and-a-half weeks.¹³

On 11 August Humphrey informed FDR of his intention to fight removal from the FTC on the grounds that the President had no authority to remove a member of an independent commission.¹⁴ One week later, Humphrey wrote to Dill:

Never in my life have I reminded a person that I had done him a favor, but I am going to do so now - as this is an unusual case and under the circumstances I feel I am fully justified. You will remember when certain parties were insisting upon your being indicted in the matter of the Colville Indian Claims, and it accidentally came to my knowledge. While the parties argued that it was impossible for you to escape conviction and that the only course would be to throw yourself upon the mercy of the court, I argued with them that even if this were true, that such action on your part carried no moral turpitude and that you were innocent of any intentional wrong doing, that you were a young man and it would tend largely to discredit you and would be a disgrace through life - and that I would not consent to it. Just recently I have seen one of the men who attended that conference, and without any prompting from me, when I mentioned the subject, he stated the facts as I recalled them and he recalls the plea that I made for you. He thought that this plea stopped further proceedings. At any rate, they were stopped.

When Mr. Bell seemed likely to involve you in certain unfortunate real estate transactions, I heard of the matter and immediately notified you, so that you were able to protect yourself. . . .

I think there is the making of a lot of trouble for the accomplishment of so little a purpose.¹⁵

¹²William Humphrey to Clarence Dill, 25 July 1933, Humphrey Collection.

¹³William Humphrey to Franklin Roosevelt, 1 August 1933. Franklin Roosevelt to William Humphrey, 4 August 1933, Humphrey Collection.

¹⁴William Humphrey to Franklin Roosevelt, 11 August 1933, Humphrey Collection.

¹⁵William Humphrey to Clarence Dill, 18 August 1933, Humphrey Collection.

Dill responded to Humphrey's letter:

I have your letter of recent date, together with a copy of the letter to the President which I have read carefully. I note particularly what you say about the favors you did for me politically. I have always felt deeply grateful to you for this and as you know I have tried to repay in a small way as far as I could. If it had not been for the fight I made on you, you would not have been confirmed by the Senate the first time your name came to the Senate, nor do I think you would have been confirmed the second time had I not fought for you.

I would not mention these things except that you go back and mention the things you have done for me. On two occasions I asked the President not to remove you. I did all I could for you this time when I was there, but after all the President is boss and I can't control his appointments. I want you to know I am anxious to help you in every way I can but I think I have exhausted whatever influence I had in this particular matter. I sincerely hope, however, the letter you wrote will have the effect of causing him not to remove you.¹⁶

Humphrey continued to fight his removal. But Dill refused to intercede any further on his behalf with the President.¹⁷ Roosevelt persevered in seeking Humphrey's resignation.¹⁸

These letters reveal the clear and uncontested fact that Dill had been involved - though apparently unwittingly - in criminal activity regarding the Colville Indian Reservation while he was a congressman. It is important to remember the authorities were aware of what Dill had done, and declined to prosecute. Humphrey's letter also sheds light on Dill's relationship with Frank Bell - a long time associate. The rumors regarding Dill's alleged complicity in a Grand

¹⁶Clarence Dill to William Humphrey, 21 August 1933, Humphrey Collection.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸William Humphrey to Clarence Dill, 2 September 1933, Humphrey Collection.

Coulee land scheme emanated from Bell's activities in the Columbia Basin. Apparently Humphrey warned Dill about Bell's schemes in time for Dill to remove himself from Bell's sphere of operations. This warning may or may not have had anything to do with Bell's Columbia Basin land deals. Late in life, Bell was indicted by a Grand Jury in regard to his activities in the construction of the Priest Rapids Dam.¹⁹

The Humphrey affair occurred in late 1933 and early 1934, precisely when Dill would have been pondering a third Senate campaign. The possibility that a distraught and angry William Humphrey might go public with his accusations during that campaign had to cross Clarence Dill's mind. Had Humphrey done so, the allegations regarding Grand Coulee graft would have been harder to survive, though as we have seen, they were unfounded. Indeed, Dill's attitude toward them at the time was unique:

I don't resent the slur on my integrity, as much as the implication of political stupidity. I have never owned a foot of land there.²⁰

But the Humphrey affair was minor compared to the marital difficulties which plagued Clarence and Rosalie Dill. The first few years of the marriage seem to have gone well. Rosalie had proved herself an asset to Dill's campaign in 1928 specifically helping to swing votes in the traditionally conservative southwest corner of the state. Moreover, she had contributed substantial amounts of money

¹⁹William Humphrey to Clarence Dill, 18 August 1933. Humphrey Collection. Ken Billington, People, Politics, and Public Power (Seattle: Washington Public utility District's Association, 1988), 431.

²⁰An unidentified newspaper clipping from 1934-1935, Clarence Dill Papers.

to the campaign coffers.²¹ But as time passed it became obvious to Dill that his wife's fascination for socialism had been superficial and her sympathy for progressivism was spotty. When asked during the divorce trial in 1936 if Dill had not made clear to her his affinity for the "common people" she replied that she didn't know what Dill had meant when he referred to such people, "I always thought the common people were the nouveau riche...people who had been thrust suddenly into unaccustomed places."²² In brief, she was more conservative and more ambitious - though the latter was difficult to accomplish - than he was.

The first public rift between the two had occurred at the 1932 Democratic National convention. As we have seen Dill had a shot at becoming vice president in that year. Rosalie was excited at the possibility and worked hard at the convention to achieve that result. From a famous and wealthy New York family, she was not without influence. Her family was well acquainted with the upper class and powerful of New York and had been friends and neighbors with Theodore Roosevelt's family.²³ When she learned that Dill had been party to the deal which had made John Nance Garner FDR's running mate she blew up, called Dill a "crook and coward," and left for New York.²⁴ From that time forth the Dills' relationship was like a ship without a rudder: doomed to destruction. Beginning in 1933 they did not live together on a regular basis, and in June 1934,

²¹Seattle P.I. 30 June 1936, 2.

²²*Ibid.*, 4 July 1936, 4.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*, 3 July 1936, 1. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1936, 4. Rosalie's "crook and coward" statement was a reference to her belief that the maneuvering which brought FDR John Garner's support was somehow unethical. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1936, 2.

days before Dill decided not to seek reelection, their separate living arrangements became permanent.²⁵ Indeed, Dill's remark upon his decision to retire that he could not afford to mount political campaigns must be taken as reflection on his relationship with Rosalie at that time. For Rosalie's wealth, had it been available to him, certainly would have alleviated fears regarding campaign expenditures.

Thus, in addition to all the foregoing, Clarence's disintegrating marriage burdened him in the summer of 1934. In testimony given at his divorce trial in June of 1936 he admitted as much, his eyes near tears:

She had presented herself as sharing my progressive views. But I came to realize that she differed with me on every progressive issue and she was trying to change me and draw me over to the reactionaries. I've been in public life for a long time and I never broke faith with the men and women who elected me to office. So there was nothing else I could do. I couldn't live with her and I couldn't remain in public life.²⁶

Though the statement was somewhat self-serving, the rift between Clarence and Rosalie was deep. Within weeks of his official retirement in early 1935 the two had reached a property settlement; Dill initiated divorce proceedings against his wife on March 30, 1936.²⁷

Dill asked the Superior Court of Spokane to grant him a divorce on the grounds that Rosalie had engaged in cruelty when she called him a "crook and a coward," and when she had spread rumors that he was drinking heavily, losing his

²⁵Ibid., 30 June 1936, 1, 2.

²⁶Ibid., 30 June 1936, 1.

²⁷New York Times, 31 March 1936, 14. Seattle P.I., 1 July 1936, 4. Interlocutory Decree Of Divorce, Clarence Dill Plaintiff, versus Rosalie Jones Dill defendant, 9 July 1936, Spokane County Superior Court Case no. 97726, 7. Archives, Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, Washington.

mind, going blind, and intended to marry a high school girl.²⁸ Apparently Mrs. Dill, in addition to spreading these rumors among Clarence's friends and associates, wrote to his parents with the same accusations.²⁹ This brought the relationship to a crisis in September 1935. Rosalie testified that Dill told her one morning, "Get out of my house. My poor old parents - my poor old mother - you're killing them. It was a terrible day I let you in their lives. I don't know why I married you. If I ever made up my mind you'd deceived me, I 'd kill you and I'd kill you dead." Rosalie left the house to ask an old friend for advice, but by the time she returned Dill had regained his composure. The incident was not mentioned again until the trial.³⁰ The trial itself was front-page news even in the state's western dailies. Judge William A. Huneke ruled on 9 July 1936 that Rosalie's actions constituted grounds for divorce which became final in January 1937.³¹

Dill's retirement at the height of his political career has stumped Pacific Northwest historians for years. George Sundborg implied Dill quit in order to avoid being implicated in Grand Coulee graft.³² Just recently, Paul Pitzer wrote, "whatever the reason for his action [Dill's retirement], he kept it to himself for over forty years and then he took it with him to his grave."³³ This is possible; but it seems more likely that all the above, especially his marital problems, combined to

²⁸Seattle P.I., 26 June 1936, 1. Ibid., 8 July 1936, 1.

²⁹Ibid., 12. Ibid., 1 July 1936, 1,4. New York Times, 31 March 1936, 14. Interlocutory Decree of Divorce, 3.

³⁰Seattle P.I., 7 July 1936, 2.

³¹Interlocutory Decree of Divorce, 1.

³²Sundborg, Hail Columbia, 272.

³³Pitzer, "Grand Coulee: The Struggle," 368.

make the thought of another political campaign unbearable in the fall of 1934. In the face of such pressure Dill persuaded himself private life would probably bring him substantially more money, more time to relax and enjoy living in Spokane, would not run the risk of ruining his public image, and would lessen the publicity surrounding a divorce should one become necessary.

When Clarence Dill retired from the Senate to private law practice, his accomplishments in radio and the New Deal had provided the basis for greater unity in the nation and the transformation of the Pacific Northwest. Radio, with its ability to bring the voice of the president into the living rooms of Americans, made the people who lived in regions far removed from the nation's capital - regions such as the West - feel as if they had a greater stake in the federal government. Then too, the federal government's increased presence in the West as a result of projects like Grand Coulee further strengthened national ties. Finally, Grand Coulee put the Pacific Northwest on the path to becoming an industrial partner, rather than a colonial hinterland, in its relation to the other industrialized states in the Union.

THE LONG ROAD HOME

Unbeknownst to Clarence Dill when he retired, he was too infected with desire for political office to remain outside public life. From 1935 to 1940 he experienced both financial success and emotional turmoil as he made a law career for himself. He also came to the conclusion that his political career was not over. In the effort to revive that career Clarence faced old ghosts, old enemies, and an opponent seemingly determined to win at all costs.

Dill retired from the United States Senate at the end of his second term in March 1935, confident that President Roosevelt would see Grand Coulee finished as a high dam and eventually a reclamation project. Scarcely more than a month after leaving the Senate, Dill's contentment concerning Grand Coulee was broken. On 29 April 1935, the Supreme Court, not a Roosevelt ally in that year, "challenged the legal status of the Grand Coulee project."¹ The court ruled in regard to the Parker Dam project on the Colorado River that the PWA had no authority to construct the dam without prior approval of Congress, which was to be based on a recommendation from the Army Board of Engineers.² Of course Roosevelt had begun Grand Coulee on the same basis as he had Parker: using existing PWA funds to circumvent congressional approval.

After hearing the news about Parker dam, James O'Sullivan advised Representative Sam B. Hill of Washington's Fifth district it would be wise to gain congressional approval of Grand Coulee under the circumstances. Hill agreed and organized support for the dam. He described the process as the hardest fight he had ever undertaken. Private power interests and congressmen opposed to

¹Mitchell, Flowing Wealth, 41.

²Ibid.

reclamation - especially from the East - tried to block Grand Coulee. But Hill's coalition of Western congressmen and public power advocates survived the charges of boondoggle and graft heaped on the dam and its supporters, and won the fight. The vote in the House favored the dam 199 to 126; Grand Coulee was on sure footing.³

But the man who had played the leading role in securing the President's support of the dam was not sure of his own footing in the winter of 1934-1935. After Christmas, Dill returned to the Senate chamber to pick-up some papers. The hall was dark, empty. Only one man disturbed the somehow reverent silence. The retiring Senator looked over the gallery, the platform, sat in his chair for the last time, remembering battles won and lost, a "tinge of deep regret" overwhelmed him, then passed as a wave retreats from the shore. As if ashamed of himself for dwelling upon what had been, he remembered Lot's wife and that he had lived his dream and chosen of his own accord to move on. He quickly left the chamber.⁴

Dill opened a law office in Washington D.C. and retained his law office in Spokane. For the next few years he split time between the two cities, gradually spending more time in his western home as his practice grew. One of the reasons Dill left the Senate was to make money. He toyed with the idea of beginning a wire news service for radio, but broadcasters convinced him there was little market. However, his law practice soon flourished. Within two months of leaving the Senate, he had deposited over \$10,000 in legal fees into his bank account.⁵

Dill even entertained an offer from Clarence Darrow to join the celebrated

³Ibid.

⁴Dill, Where Water Falls, 203.

⁵Ibid.

trial lawyer in his practice, but turned the offer down because he did not hold Darrow's belief, "that every person who commits a crime is justified in his own mind and that society or big business practices are to blame." Dill said to Darrow " . . . I can't go along with that doctrine."⁶ Brought up in a Methodist home, educated in a Methodist school, Dill was steeped in the doctrine of free will and thus personal responsibility. Darrow's philosophy was antithetical to Dill's upbringing, though he was no longer a devout Methodist.

Clarence continued in his own practice, his experience in radio procuring several cases for him. In 1934 the Associated Press had brought an action against radio station KVOS of Bellingham, Washington, alleging the station was illegally reading news stories from Washington newspapers over the air. The complaint was dismissed, but the A-P appealed to the Circuit Court in San Francisco. At this point KVOS hired Dill to represent them, helping William Pemberton and Kenneth Davis. The trio lost the case before the Circuit Court, but on writ of certiorari argued KVOS's case before the Supreme Court in November 1936 and won.⁷ In addition to this radio case, Dill kept busy handling appeals from FCC rulings for clients generally too far away to easily come to Washington D.C.

It had always been Dill's intention to eventually live full time in Spokane. It took love to finally move him west for good. Not long after Dill divorced Rosalie he met Mabel Dickson, who was working as the National Supervisor of Home Economics for Land Grant Colleges in Washington D.C.⁸ He crossed Mabel's path in connection with her work and though twenty years separated them in age,

⁶Ibid., 204.

⁷Ibid., 207.

⁸Spokane Chronicle, 21 March 1969, n.p.

romance followed. They were married in April 1939.

Neither of the newlyweds were particularly fond of life in Washington D.C. Mabel's longing for the region of her childhood, the West, soon convinced Dill to liquidate his practice in the nation's capital and return to his Spokane home later that year.⁹ Shortly after their arrival, the Dills began building a mansion on the cliffs south of downtown Spokane. The home has a commanding view of the Spokane Valley, on a clear day one could see the Selkirk Mountains in Canada one hundred miles to the north. The couple built the house in 1940, but before it was even finished the restless ex-senator had his eyes on another mansion.

Speculation concerning Dill's political plans arose in May 1940 when work on his cliff-side home inexplicably came to a halt.¹⁰ Questioned as to his political future, the former senator was not forthcoming until nearly one month later when he announced his candidacy for the office of governor.¹¹ In his announcement he pledged to bring efficiency and economy to state government, thus eliminating the state's budget deficit, while adding to old age pensions and providing a secure funding base for schools. Dill also claimed it would be possible to reduce state taxes and accused Democratic Governor Clarence Martin of arrogating to himself too much power. The would-be governor proposed to decentralize that power by dividing it among other elected officials and returning some of it to county governments. Finally, he advocated maximum development of the state's hydroelectric power resources through public power administration.¹² Publicly

⁹Dill, Where Water Falls, 211.

¹⁰Spokesman-Review, 5 May 1940, n.p.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Dill's announcement for Governor, 8 June 1940, CDP.

Dill's desire to secure cheap electrical power for Washington was his primary motive in running for governor; privately he was responding to Governor Martin's threat to expose his alleged involvement in Columbia Basin land graft if he ran against the governor. Dill was enraged at Martin's threat, and weary of the rumors the governor referred to. He resolved to run against Martin, a Democrat less devoted to public power, in the primary election.¹³

In July Dill toured the state. He found the people responded enthusiastically to his message of tax cuts, reduced state spending, and elimination of government waste.¹⁴ In these attacks on the Martin administration Dill sounded strangely conservative but was in reality simply demonstrating the pragmatic side of his political make-up. He believed these issues represented Martin's weak points. In an interview with the Wenatchee Daily World he claimed he was shaking hands with three to four hundred people per day.¹⁵

In mid July Dill learned that Arthur Langlie had entered the race on the Republican side. He was not displeased, as he hoped the charismatic Langlie would draw some of Martin's Republican supporters away since Washington's primary law allowed for cross-over voting. Dill said in response to Langlie's candidacy, "I feel more secure of the Democratic nomination now than ever."¹⁶

Martin did not share Dill's sanguine perspective. In July he claimed FDR

¹³Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 6 August 1940, President's Personal File 243, FDR Library, Hyde Park. The letter is also found in the J.D. Ross Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle. Dill, Where Water Falls, 217.

¹⁴Wenatchee Daily World, 18 July 1940, 2.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 17 July 1940, 2.

would soon take part in the campaign on his behalf. Martin further posited that Dill was only running against him because he was seeking a third term as Washington's governor. Thus Martin implied Dill opposed FDR's own bid for a third term. Incensed, Dill wrote a two-page letter to the President explaining the situation to FDR, especially Martin's twisting of the facts in regard to Dill's purpose in running for governor. Dill assured the President of his support, then asked, in the politest of terms, if FDR would not hold himself aloof from Washington's gubernatorial race. Somewhat preoccupied in 1940, FDR was only too happy to oblige, though he did find time to write to Dill, "You can make it perfectly clear that I am not taking part in the gubernatorial campaign in the state of Washington."¹⁷ Martin would receive no help from the President.

Dill had informed Roosevelt of his public power agenda for the campaign. In keeping with his support of public power, he opposed the highly controversial private power sponsored Initiative 139, which would have made it difficult for public utility districts (PUD's) to purchase or build power plants and distribution systems.¹⁸ Dill also capitalized on his record as a builder. In a handbill he cited his opening of the Colville Indian Reservation and his role in building Grand Coulee Dam, among other accomplishments. If elected he promised to expand Washington's rural road network, enhance the state's public power system, and work for state help in raising teachers' salaries. The old progressive was still alive and well.¹⁹

¹⁷Franklin Roosevelt to Clarence Dill, 12 August 1940, President's Personal File. Copy also found in the J.D. Ross Papers.

¹⁸Press release to Grange News, 17 August 1940, Houghton, Cluck, Coughlan, and Schubat Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

¹⁹Handbill, Houghton, Cluck, Coughlan, and Schubat Papers. Everett

For his part, Martin hoped to retain labor's support. He reminded workers that his appointments had often met with their approval. Dill responded that Martin's labor record was pathetic compared to his own work in Congress. He claimed that in the years he had represented Washington he had been asked to vote on labor issues 320 times and on every occasion had voted with labor.²⁰ Such, indeed, seems to have been the case. Dill even secured a letter from William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, substantiating his favorable record on labor issues.²¹ Such slavish devotion to labor would seem to offer Martin an opportunity to score political points, but he coveted labor's vote to the extent that he dared not criticize Dill's labor voting record. If Dill were to win the primary his Republican challenger would not be so cautious. But he could not afford to worry about what Republicans might do for Martin was too formidable an opponent to look ahead. In order to secure the support of the AFL Dill promised James Taylor, President of Washington State's AFL, that if elected he would appoint an acceptable person to head the Department of Labor and Industries.²²

Of course gaining the support of the AFL did not necessarily mean Dill would garner all the votes of laboring men. For Washington was in the thick of the battle between the AFL and the new Congress of Industrial Organization for

Daily Herald, 25 October 1940, 10.

²⁰Seattle P-I, 19 August 1940, 4.

²¹Telegram, William Green, to Clarence Dill, 27 August 1940, Letter from William Green to Clarence Dill, 27 August 1940, Naomi Benson Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

²²Clarence Dill to James Taylor, 19 August 1940, Naomi Benson Collection.

control of the American labor union movement.²³ Indeed Dave Beck, a teamster organizer from Seattle, would rise through the ranks of the AFL to become one of the most powerful union men in the US.²⁴ During the 1940 gubernatorial campaign the CIO, led by John L. Lewis, split dramatically over Lewis' decision to support Republican Wendell Wilkie instead of FDR.²⁵ William Green sought to take advantage of the split in the CIO declaring the organization was "torn with dissension, divided politically because its leaders seek to compel it to support a political party."²⁶ Under normal circumstances Dill could have hoped for the support of both major union organizations. But after Lewis left the Democratic camp little was certain concerning the support of the CIO.

As the campaign wore into the summer it became clear that Dill was the far more liberal candidate. In a statement for the Seattle P-I, he argued that the future of public power and old age pensions depended on who was elected governor. He reiterated his opposition to initiative 139 and his support for initiative 141 (which would increase old age pensions). Finally, Dill stated that the only way to pay for pensions and put schools on a secure funding basis was to simplify and decentralize state government.²⁷

Martin responded that tinkering with state government would create uncertainty in business circles and jeopardize Washington state's economy, which

²³Walter Galenson, The CIO Challenge to the AFL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 552-555.

²⁴Ibid., 494.

²⁵Bellingham Herald, 27 October 1940, 2.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Seattle P-I, 21 August 1940, 9.

would lead to even greater problems in funding pensions and schools. In short, Martin, a staunch conservative, believed in standing pat.²⁸

The governor wasn't the only one afraid of Dill. Before the primary, Republicans, secure in the belief that the popular Langlie was unstoppable on their ticket, encouraged members of their party to cross over and vote for Martin. They reasoned that in a Langlie\ Martin race Langlie would probably defeat the taciturn Martin, and if he did not, Martin would still make a safe governor. Dill was an altogether different prospect. Fiery and sometimes radical, the western progressive frightened Republicans and conservative Democrats. It seemed wise to stop him in the primary if possible.²⁹

Martin's concerns about Dill and his appeal to labor were realistic; indeed, his efforts to stop the hemorrhaging of labor support were not successful. Straw polls revealed labor backed Dill in large numbers regardless of the opponent, though Dave Beck supported Martin in the primary, while Langlie was the businessman's favorite in spite of his advocacy for increased pensions. Dill also received the nod from farmers at this point in the election.³⁰

In the Summer of 1940 the United States moved ever closer toward war. President Roosevelt, torn by the imminence of war and the antipathy of Americans to that war, nevertheless prevailed upon Congress to institute a peacetime draft,

²⁸Ibid., 22 August 1940, 9. Clarence Dill to FDR, 6 August 1940, James Ross Papers. Seattle P.I., 9 September 1940, 1,4. Wenatchee Daily World, 9 September 1940, 1.

²⁹Wenatchee Daily World, 9 September 1940, 1. Seattle P-I, 9 September 1940, 1.

³⁰Wenatchee Daily World, 2 September 1940, 1. Ibid., 3 September 1940, 2. Ibid., 3 September 1940, 1. George Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie: Republican Governor in a Democratic Age" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1971), 72.

the first such draft in American history. He also traded fifty old destroyers to Great Britain for naval bases in the Western Hemisphere in an effort to bolster British escort capabilities. In the East, Japan's move into Southeast Asia caused tension to increase between the land of the rising sun and the United States.³¹

In light of these developments it is rather surprising that Dill's role in the Great War did not become a major issue until the last week of the primary campaign. It was then that a Martin supporter, attorney Frank Cheney, ripped into Dill's World War I voting record saying the ex-senator "had twice voted against conscription, ...had voted against an increase in the navy, and against the Gardner anti-espionage amendment." Cheney went on to say:

Verily a tree is known by the fruit it bears...on behalf of your sons and mine who may have to offer their lives in defense of our country, I ask that this man be permanently and emphatically defeated.³²

It was too little too late. Dill received 186,008 votes to Martin's 114,484. Langlie easily won the Republican primary as expected with 160,551 votes.³³

Both Dill and Langlie had campaigned on the theme that Martin's administration was wasteful and inefficient, a traditional concern of both progressives (Dill) and conservatives (Langlie), though it is worth noting that before the campaign Langlie had complimented the governor on his stewardship of the state's finances. As his biographer has noted, Langlie could be boldly

³¹Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 240-250.

³²Seattle P-I, 3 September 1940, 3.

³³Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of Washington in the Primary Election 10 September 1940, Secretary of State (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Seattle Times, 11 September 1940, 1.

hypocritical at times.³⁴ Hypocritical or not, the cross-fire from Dill and Langlie was deadly for Martin, he had little chance; the politics of caution fell to the promise of reform and change. The only questions remaining were who would implement that change and how drastic would it be? Unfortunately, less weighty issues obscured that question during the fall campaign.

The two candidates relaxed for a few days after the primary. Dill went fishing, which allowed him to recoup his strength and ponder the coming campaign in between strikes.³⁵ The Democratic nominee well knew his adversary was a worthy opponent. Victory would require mustering all potential support. As the gently rippling waters passed by, Dill realized that only a united Democratic party could hope to win the governor's seat. To that end Dill reconciled with Governor Martin who agreed to campaign for the party's nominee. Thus were the Democrats united, at least publicly.³⁶ Langlie did not delay in attacking Dill or in ridiculing the new Democratic solidarity:

This was not an ordinary fight [the primary contest between Dill and Martin]...vast sums of money were spent - and yet now we are treated to a scene that puts Romeo and Juliet to shame.

The people of the state were forgotten last night. They didn't count. All that mattered was the machine.³⁷

Then Langlie addressed the theme of preparedness, accusing liberals of being less than supportive of adequate defense measures, and proclaiming "The

³⁴Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 68.

³⁵ Clarence Dill to Franklin Roosevelt, 15 October 1940, President's Personal File 243, FDR Library, Hyde Park.

³⁶Seattle P-I, 26 September 1940, 1. Wenatchee Daily World, 26 September 1940, 2.

³⁷Seattle P-I, 27 September 1940, 3.

Commonwealth Federation [a group advocating liberal political causes] is doing everything it can to obstruct the defense program of the United States."³⁸ Langlie finished his opening attack on Dill with a broadside at the Department of Labor and Industries and at the Democratic party leadership:

It [the department] is costing such a high rate that it is forcing small industries out of operation. It needs a thoroughgoing reorganization...

I don't want to see this state taken over by any machine-controlled gang. Democratic government can be the rottenest form of all government when its improperly administered.³⁹

Dill's new opponent, unlike Clarence Martin, would not hesitate to make Dill's ties to labor a campaign issue. Indeed, as the above demonstrates, Langlie cast those ties in the shadows of criminal behavior.

Such a characterization was not difficult to accomplish. Labor leaders such as William Green were fighting to keep criminal activity out of unions, but some unions had been infiltrated by organized crime.⁴⁰ In the midst of the 1940 campaign Green felt it necessary to announce that the union would take action against "gangster penetration of affiliated unions," and had already done so in

³⁸Ibid. The Washington Commonwealth Federation was organized in Tacoma in 1934. Its purpose was to promote liberal, even radical, political causes such as the "production for use referendum" defeated by Washington's voters in 1936. The WCF was conspicuous in its support for the New Deal and vociferously opposed both Martin's reelection and the Langlie candidacy in 1940. The WCF had developed strong support from both the AFL and CIO. Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 69-71, 100.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Jonathan Dembo, "Dave Beck and the Transportation Revolution," in Experiences in a Promised Land, ed. Thomas Edwards and Carlos A. Schwantes (Seattle: University of Washington, 1986), 344, 350. The Labor Journal, 11 October 1940, 1.

Chicago and New York.⁴¹ The situation in Washington was little different. In the general election Dill had the support of Dave Beck, vice president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in 1940, but formerly a Seattle labor leader with a reputation for ruthlessness and illegal activity.⁴² In addition, officers of the four large railroad brotherhoods endorsed Dill unequivocally, as they had the entire Democratic ticket. The Washington State federation of Labor had previously endorsed the Democrats as well.⁴³

These circumstances, combined with Dill's unblemished labor voting record, were enough to convince a number of voters that he was a labor puppet. Indeed, Langlie purposely planted in the minds of voters the idea that labor's support of Dill constituted old fashioned machine politics. The Republican particularly attacked Beck's support of Dill declaring, "honest government is vital to the protection of honest labor." Beck fired back calling Langlie "the man with the automatic mouth."⁴⁴ Such name calling tactics were typical of Langlie who had learned them well as a member of Seattle's Cincinnatus Club and as a candidate for Seattle City Council.⁴⁵ Moreover, the old rumors concerning Dill's alleged profit from Grand Coulee land schemes further prepared the public mind to accept the idea he was for sale. The polish of the messenger no doubt delivered a few more votes to the Republican column. In late September Langlie said:

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Dembo, "Dave Beck and the Transportation Revolution," 350. Wenatchee Daily World, 16 October 1940, 2.

⁴³Seattle P. I., 26 September 1940. 20.

⁴⁴Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 73-74.

⁴⁵Ibid., 20.

Bear these facts well in mind - it is the governor who is the highest administrative officer of our state, it is he to whom we must look for the firm hand to guide us in the unpredictable days to come, it is he to whom the aged must look for fulfillment of their pension needs, it is he to whom the schools must look for fulfillment of financial obligations. It is he to whom the people must look for proper supervision of the military draft act, it is he to whom the people must trust the spending of nearly one hundred millions of their tax dollars annually.

Do you want to put these obligations and privileges in the hands of a political machine operated from behind the scenes by such men as John C. Stevenson, Hugh De Lacy, Frank Funkhouser, Frank Bell, Dave Beck, William Edris, and Joseph Gottstein?

If you don't want these men and the Washington Commonwealth Federation dictating to you through your state government, you must get in this fight.⁴⁶

The governor's race of 1940 would be a completely different campaign than any in Dill's experience. Nevertheless, he responded to Langlie's blast with charges of his own. He asserted that a Langlie victory would reduce the financial benefits which public power, properly administered, would one day bring the state. He implied Langlie was a pawn of the power trust:

The issue in this campaign is: How, by whom and for whom are these new millions [federal war spending] to be employed? Is the program of cheap public power to be enforced? Is the development of our state to be placed in capable and unshackled hands and worked out for the benefit of all the people, or will the power trust and the political rings which in the past have thwarted this development be permitted to resume control?

The inauguration of the policy of boosting water bills in Seattle to make up for any shortage in the city's budget leaves no doubt as to my opponent's stand. That policy of bleeding a publicly owned utility to meet a political need, if applied throughout the state, will sabotage the entire public ownership program and destroy instantly any benefits of the public power program in this state.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Seattle P.I., 30 September 1940, 11.

⁴⁷Ibid., 30 September 1940, 11.

The battle was joined, but Langlie's attack seemed to possess more power, seemed to make more indelible impressions. His use of names in support of his "machine" accusations lent credence to those charges; in contrast, Dill was vague.⁴⁸

As September gave way to an emerald and gold October, the candidates toured the state in an effort to convince the confused and energize the lethargic. Langlie typically campaigned from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., drumming for support in small towns and large.⁴⁹ Political pundits predicted a Dill victory. However, the combatants took nothing for granted, though Dill's speeches reflected his front-runner status in their avoidance of inflammatory rhetoric.⁵⁰

The issues are pretty clear by now. I announced my platform in the primary campaign and I am going down the line now on that platform. I am ahead in this race and I am going to try and stay ahead. Mr. Langlie is going to have some work to do if he covers the ground I have already covered and expects to get over it in the next three weeks.⁵¹

Langlie accepted underdog status and campaigned like one. In Mid-October he appeared to provide substance to his machine charge when he asserted that a Democratic campaign official pressured Spokane city employees for money arguing, "It is better to give up a month's salary than be unemployed for four years." Langlie commented on the alleged activity, "that's what I mean by machine politics." Of course he meant a great deal more, but the money pressuring story served his purpose nicely; it allowed him to expound on his idea for a merit system

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 68.

⁵⁰New York Times, 14 October 1940, 12.

⁵¹Wenatchee Daily World, 4 October 1940, 2.

for government employees which would reduce party patronage. Thus a minor issue briefly captured the attention of the state and further substantiated Langlie's "machine" charges.⁵²

A few days later Dill categorically denied soliciting funds in the manner Langlie described and further stated his campaign workers were under strict orders not to engage in any such tactics. The Wenatchee Daily World, a fiercely Republican newspaper, reported that it had been Martin loyalists who were putting the squeeze on city employees:

Local Central Committee Democrats said they knew of several instances where job-holders had been asked to contribute money, ostensibly for the Dill campaign, but in reality to cover a Martin primary deficit.⁵³

Langlie's blows and the grind of the campaign wore on Dill. At 56, he was no longer the young man who had driven the dusty roads of northeastern Washington during his campaign of 1914. Yet he maintained the same kind of schedule as he had nearly thirty years ago. On Thursday, October 10, he made seven speeches on the west side of the state, rain muffled his voice and the enthusiasm of the crowds. By three p.m. he was in Wenatchee, and by eight the next morning, he was shaking hands again. In the afternoon he spoke in Leavenworth, Entiat, Ardenvoir, and Cashmere. Saturday he was scheduled for nine speeches in Whitman county.⁵⁴ In the midst of this mind-numbing schedule

⁵²Wenatchee Daily World, 9 October 1940, 2. Langlie's charges were similar to Republican National Chairman Joseph W. Martin Jr.'s allegation that the Democratic National Committee had demanded campaign contributions from more than one million federal employees. Everett Daily Herald, 18 October 1940, 6.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 12 October 1940, 2.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 11 October 1940, 2.

he confessed to the Wenatchee Daily World, "This is the last political campaign I will ever make." The words were a promise to himself, in the throes of physical exhaustion, that he would never suffer such affliction again. And like the miler who tells himself he can go still faster because he can rest soon, it was a means of summoning his last reserves of strength for the task at hand: give it all you've got, he thought, you'll never have to do it again.

In his speeches Dill asked the people of Washington to defeat Initiative 139 which would have required PUD's to earn a majority vote in a special election if they desired to expand; but the majority required was to be based on the number of votes cast in the last general election, a difficult task for a single issue. In his fight for the governor's chair Dill received the support of Senator Homer Bone who campaigned strongly against Initiative 139 and for Dill. But Langlie came out against 139 as well and thus stole some of Clarence's thunder. Nevertheless, Dill continued to color Langlie as a tool of private power calling him the "nominee of the 'private power crowd,'" while Bone reminded voters of Dill's work for Grand Coulee and his impeccable public power record.⁵⁵

Dill further implored voters to elect Democrats to other government positions so he could build the state according to his vision:

Therefore I want you to give careful consideration to your county candidates and to the men you send to the legislature. The governor must have a legislature favorable to him or he is prevented from setting up a more economical but more beneficial state government.

When I go to Olympia I will bring about a great change. Its basis will be a reduction of state expenditures so that we can have money for other worthy purposes, such as pensions. The first thing to do is to get the

⁵⁵Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 75-76. Seattle P. I. 3 November 1940, 8.

state on a cash basis and eliminate the yearly deficits.⁵⁶

In response, Langlie was both relentless and masterful. He turned Dill's promise to bring efficiency to state government into a program to deprive "good men and women" of their jobs. Then he charged that Dill had promised every job on the state payroll three times over to those involved in the Democratic "machine." According to Langlie, Dill was either taking good jobs from innocent hard working people (who were previously part of Martin's "machine"), or promising jobs to "political has-beens."⁵⁷

With three weeks left in the campaign Langlie decided to focus his attack on labor's "self centered leaders." In a Tacoma speech he emphasized his support for labor in general, collective bargaining, and workmen's insurance. He cast himself as labor's protector against the exploitative tactics of "some" greedy employers and a "few" labor leaders.⁵⁸ In Spokane, he promised workers to reform the Department of Labor and Industries so as to expedite benefits to injured workmen.⁵⁹

Nor did Langlie forget to hammer away at his opponent's private life and public policies. In a master-stroke, he challenged Dill, who had made a considerable amount of money in the previous five years, to make public his recent income tax returns, thus again implying unethical conduct on Dill's part.⁶⁰ Langlie

⁵⁶Seattle P-I, 10 October 1940, 14.

⁵⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 16 October 1940, 2.

⁵⁸Seattle P-I, 16 October 1940, 12.

⁵⁹Seattle Times, 18 October 1940, 8.

⁶⁰Ibid., Seattle P-I, 18 October 1940, 3. Wenatchee Daily World, 19 October 1940, 9.

also attacked Dill's tax-cutting ideas, leaving the wholly erroneous impression the Democrat would not provide for old age pensions, school funding, or other essential services.⁶¹

However, these were but side shows. Always Langlie returned to his theme that Dill was a machine politician. How ironic that the man so often and deeply reviled in his own party for being an independent, the man who had been out of politics for six years, the man who had caught George Norris' attention as an independent, the man who the Martin Democrats - the Democrats who did have political power - bent every muscle to defeat, should be cast in the role of the ultimate party hack.⁶² But the thirties and forties were decades in which labor was flexing its muscles - sometimes violently. Moreover, politicians had grown up with the graft associated with Prohibition, and government often seemed unable or unwilling to cope with the problems engendered by the Depression. Strong men like Huey Long, if not common, were certainly possible. In such conditions conservatives were often described as being firmly controlled by the big money interests, while those sympathetic to the working man were customarily described by their opponents as being firmly in the grasp of a "political machine" controlled by organized labor.

It was even more ironic that the master campaigner from the teens and twenties should prove so ineffectual in 1940. But Dill's response to Langlie's vituperative and visceral onslaught was certainly mild. Instead of attacking Langlie, he charged the newspapers with covering only half the campaign: the

⁶¹Wenatchee Daily World, 18 October 1940, 9.

⁶²Ibid., 21 October 1940, 2. Ibid., 23 October 1940, 2.

Republican half, and argued they ought to give equal time to political candidates.⁶³ While true to a point, Dill's charge was essentially irrelevant, and more importantly, failed to parry Langlie's blows. Nor did it make any friends in the media; the next day, the Wenatchee Daily World resurrected the enforced campaign contribution story.⁶⁴

The Wenatchee World was not the only paper bent on the demise of Dill's political career. Indeed the state's major dailies were either for Langlie or chose to remain aloof. The Seattle Times left no story untold in its effort to defeat the Democrat, while the Spokesman-Review and Bellingham Herald all pushed the Langlie candidacy ardently.⁶⁵ The Everett Daily Herald and Tacoma News Tribune confined themselves to urging their readers to vote. The latter paper believed partisanship was ruining the country and reminded readers of George Washington's admonition against party spirit.⁶⁶ The Seattle P. I., which had supported Dill in 1922 and 1928, was also fairly even handed in its campaign coverage but refused to endorse Dill.⁶⁷

Now late in October, the Langlie campaign picked up momentum. Nine mayors from small northeastern Washington towns, Dill's home region, perhaps impressed with Langlie's background as Seattle's mayor, came out in support of him declaring:

⁶³Ibid., Ibid., 24 October 1940, 13.

⁶⁴Ibid., 24 October 1940, 2.

⁶⁵Seattle Times, 3 November, 1940, 6. Spokesman-Review, 3 November 1940, 4. Ibid., 2 November 1940, 4. Bellingham Herald, 27 October 1940, 6. Ibid., 11 September 1940, 4.

⁶⁶Tacoma News Tribune, 29 October 1940. Ibid., 2 November 1940. Everett Daily Herald, October and November 1940.

⁶⁷Seattle P.I. October and November 1940.

Today Mr. Langlie is the most able administrator in the state of Washington, and if elected governor will undoubtedly do much for the cause of good government. Through him every county, city and town will be materially benefited.⁶⁸

For his part, Langlie consistently characterized Dill as a crook:

The lines of battle are clearly drawn. I am fighting on the side of those who want honest government, honestly administered, a government unencumbered by self seeking cliques or groups, and free from commitments to special interests or selfish individuals.

My opponent reveals himself by his actions, his associates and his record as a leader of a political machine assembled for the purpose of taking over our state in the interest of forces which, though often repudiated by the people, now consider the ex-senator a "Trojan horse," by which they can insinuate themselves into the heart of our state government.⁶⁹

According to Langlie, then, Dill was either the leader of a sinister political machine or the innocent means by which that machine would gain control of state government; moreover, the machine itself alternated between being entrenched under Clarence Martin or threatening to take over the state under Clarence Dill. Reality mattered little to Langlie, as long as the word "machine" was associated with Dill's name. In response, Dill focused on his plans to improve pensions and provide a more secure basis for school funding. In this effort, he did not ease the Langlie-inspired concerns of many Washingtonians.⁷⁰

Langlie's assault on Dill gained new fury as November approached. Albert Goss, who had been Master of the Washington State Grange, had worked with Dill to gain FDR's approval of Grand Coulee Dam, and had become a federal land

⁶⁸Seattle Times, 24 October 1940, 2.

⁶⁹Ibid., 25 October 1940, 8. Wenatchee Daily World, 25 October 1940, 2. Ibid., 28 October 1940, 2.

⁷⁰Seattle P-I, 27 October 1940, 12.

bank commissioner in the Roosevelt administration in 1933, attacked Dill on two fronts. Goss had served as a land bank commissioner until March of 1940 when he resigned.⁷¹ He claimed that Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture at that time, Henry Wallace, was guilty of a "shameful effort to change the farmers' cooperative credit system into a political organization."⁷² However, during the election of 1940, he accused Dill of placing the land bank under a spoils system when he was a senator back in the mid-thirties. Goss asserted that in so doing Dill had created a political machine.⁷³ Apparently Goss had no problem working as a land bank commissioner under "Dill's machine," but balked at the Roosevelt administration's alleged politicizing of the land bank in 1940. In short, the former commissioner's comments made little sense but did provide great headlines. Goss also declared Dill had been "cold on the proposition" to build Grand Coulee Dam before FDR approved the \$63,000,000 dollars in PWA funds.⁷⁴ Goss' remarks about Grand Coulee drew a heated response from Dill. He called Goss little more than an interloper in the effort to build the dam, which was an accurate if uncharitable assessment. As Goss' version of how the dam was approved does not bare scrutiny.

Days before the election, Dill decided his strategy of ignoring Langlie's charges had been unwise. He now vehemently denied that he owed jobs to campaign workers or labor figures or was a tool of labor leaders.⁷⁵ He called

⁷¹Bellingham Herald, 16 October 1940, 8.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Wenatchee Daily World, 28 October 1940, 12.

⁷⁴Ibid., 31 October 1940, 1.

⁷⁵Ibid., 1 November 1940, 12.

Langlie's charges "silly," and caustically replied that his "machine had apparently given Herbert Hoover 145,000 more votes in 1928 than it had him." Dill went on:

My election was won by the people in the little towns, the neighborhood areas and the farming communities. That "machine" never wants anything but honest government and the election of a man who is on the side of the people who need help.⁷⁶

In the last days of the campaign Dill took to the radio to put his program before the people. He answered Langlie's charges, explaining his solutions to the state's problems. He also responded to Langlie's assertion that he was a "radical" (thus opposed to preparedness):

Of course, I know that my opponent's intention and the intention of the Seattle Times is to give the impression that I am in favor of the kind of radicalism that would overturn our system of government [probably the last thing a machine politician would want]. They would have the people believe that I sympathize with the fifth columnists who would sabotage preparedness and national solidarity and would wink at and overlook subversive activities of various kinds throughout the country. They do not dare make these statements openly. That would be too brazen a lie about me. So they try to insinuate it by shouting Dill is a "radical."⁷⁷

The next day Dill returned insult for insult, accusing Langlie of being a tool of the "entire special privilege machine that has fought me ever since I have run for public office." Then Dill associated Langlie with the forces attempting to defeat Initiative 139, the "last stand of the private power interests in Washington." The arrows of invective and insult were flying.⁷⁸

Langlie's forces, however, held in reserve one last salvo. A few days

⁷⁶Seattle P-I, 2 November 1940, 1.

⁷⁷Dill radio speech, 1 November 1940, CDP.

⁷⁸Seattle P-I, 3 November 1940, 12.

before the campaign ended, the Dill people published a list of businessmen who supported their candidate. On November 4, the day before the election, Langlie's campaign staff charged that the list was a fraud - half the people listed had never given their support to Dill.⁷⁹ On election day, Joseph Adams, Clarence's campaign manager in King and Kitsap counties, accused the Langlie people of knowingly using individuals with similar names in similar businesses to those on Dill's list to claim the Dill campaign had used their names without permission. The news article said in part:

Here's how the tricky blitzkrieg of deceit is worked by the Langlie backers. They look up the name of a Johnson Fuel and Feed Co. operated by O.C. Johnson. [They persuaded]...him into making a protest that he did not authorize the use of his name in our advertising.

We didn't use O.C. Johnson's name. We did use Ed S. Johnson's name in the advertising. It was authorized and Mr. Johnson is going to vote for C.C. Dill.⁸⁰

The brawl was over, the people went to the polls. In Spokane voters trudged through fresh snow in order to cast their ballots. It was not a good omen for Clarence Dill.

The American people did not keep FDR in suspense long. It was soon obvious the Squire of Hyde Park would become the first man elected to serve three terms as President of the United States. In addition, Democrat Mon Wallgren became one of Washington's senators.⁸¹ Thus Dill had reason to hope that his own election was imminent. However, the electorate was not as kind to Arthur Langlie or Clarence Dill. The two men were locked in a contest which refused to end.

⁷⁹Seattle Times, 4 November 1940, 1.

⁸⁰Seattle P-I, 5 November 1940, 4.

⁸¹Ibid., 6 November 1940, 1.

The election returns for the 1940 governor's race in Washington took both candidates on a roller coaster ride. Ballot counting went into the night: first Dill led, then Langlie, then Dill again. In the early hours of Wednesday, Pierce County, Dill's most reliable base of support on the west side of the mountains, had given him a substantial 11,000 vote lead. When morning broke Langlie refused to comment.⁸²

By Wednesday afternoon, however, the Republican had climbed back into the race. With approximately 80% of the state's precincts reporting, Langlie claimed a 2,734 vote lead.⁸³ He had taken the majority of eastern and rural counties offsetting Dill's strength in the cities. As those returns came in Langlie's lead increased, eventually cresting at 7,000 votes. Then other returns from King and Pierce counties began to siphon away the Republican's lead. The two metropolitan counties desiccated his advantage all through Wednesday night: at one point the lead had dropped to 6,000; then 3,000; when morning came his lead was only 1,580.⁸⁴ Officials predicted the election would not be decided until absentee ballots had been counted.⁸⁵ Both sides expressed confidence in the result, though they would have to wait a week to discover it. It had been thirty years since the governor's race had been so close.⁸⁶

In the meantime political observers analyzed the election. Unable to wait

⁸²Ibid., Seattle Times, 6 November 1940, 1.

⁸³Ibid., 1,14.

⁸⁴Seattle P-I, 7 November 1940, 1. Wenatchee Daily World, 7 November 1940, 1.

⁸⁵Ibid., 6 November 1940, 1. Seattle Times, 6 November 1940, 1.

⁸⁶Wenatchee Daily World, 8 November 1940, 1. New York Times, 8 November 1940, 14.

for the result, they assumed Langlie's lead, though precarious, would hold. Thus the task at hand was to account for Langlie's stunning upset victory. Conventional wisdom held that Langlie's Scandinavian heritage mitigated Dill's strength in the Puget Sound region, home to many of Scandinavian descent. The argument went that Langlie had taken many Democratic or liberal Republican Scandinavian voters who would otherwise have voted for Dill. This argument would seem to have some merit, though it would be impossible to gauge how much. Others argued Langlie was more well known than Dill, who had been out of politics six years. This theory is certainly suspect. Langlie had never been more than mayor of Seattle. Though highly visible to political analysts, this position hardly surpassed Dill's status in the state.⁸⁷ Some argued Langlie's solid organization and cunning campaign strategy were key. But The Republican party's organization was weak in 1940 and thus was more likely a handicap than a help, though Langlie's own staff was excellent.⁸⁸

On the other hand there is no doubt that Langlie's campaign was near flawlessly executed. He early on removed public power as a galvanizing issue by opposing Initiative 139, though he did not emphasize his opposition. He agreed with Dill that the head of the social security department, Charles Ernst, had to go (Dill had castigated Martin for refusing to fire Ernst, alleging the latter was responsible for waste in the department). Thus another of the Democrat's issues died quietly. Langlie also turned Dill's plan to reorganize state government against

⁸⁷The fact that this argument was made serves to highlight the still provincial nature of Washington state politics in 1940. Dill was an easterner, to some west-side political analysts the mayor of Seattle loomed larger than a Senator of noted accomplishments. Moreover it partially explains the fact that Dill never received due credit for those accomplishments. Among other things, which will attract our attention later, he lived on the wrong side of the state.

⁸⁸Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 66.

him, arguing that while the state needed to reorganize it could not afford to lose quality people. The state's workers all thought he meant them and many worked diligently for his election (thus further discrediting Langlie's "machine" allegations).⁸⁹ The two men's views on old age pensions were indistinguishable, but that didn't stop Langlie from scaring the elderly when he said Dill's tax cuts might affect pensions.

Observers also believed that Albert Goss' pronouncements on Dill's role in regard to farm loans probably delivered votes to Langlie. There is more to this hypothesis than even those who put it forward realized. In past elections Dill had always been able to count on reasonable support in rural counties. But in 1940 Clarence lost 23 out of 35 rural counties, his rural wins were narrow victories and generally in timber-oriented counties (Grays Harbor, Mason, and Kitsap etc.) while his losses were generally in farming counties and by massive numbers. Yakima county went for Langlie by nearly 7,000 votes, Whitman 4,000 votes (2-1), and Walla Walla 5,000 votes (more than 2-1). These are but a sample, there were others. Dill, of course, won in the cities. But his home, Spokane, gave him only 1,500 more votes than Langlie. There were bright spots; Pierce county held firm providing a 9,000 vote plurality, while King county provided 7,000 votes to the good, Snohomish 3,000.⁹⁰ Had Dill carried most of the agricultural counties, as he always had before, he would have won. Thus Langlie's biographer George

⁸⁹Seattle P. I. 10 November 1940, 11.

⁹⁰Ibid. Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the General Election Held November 5, 1940 (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Dill had always had strong labor support in Pierce County (Tacoma) and had been an adopted favorite son since 1924 when he had supported the city's bid to rename Mount Rainier Mount Tacoma. He had even introduced a resolution in Congress to that effect. Congressional Record (17 January 1924), vol. 65, pt. 2, 1074. Bellingham Herald, 11 September 1940, 3.

Scott was correct when he cited Central Washington's agricultural counties as being the key to Langlie's win.⁹¹

There were several explanations as to why Dill lost so many of the farm counties. First, Langlie devoted a great deal of time to the region.⁹² There was good reason. His "machine" charges would have found the most receptive ears in Washington's rural agricultural counties. Accusations of "machine" politics and labor ties would not have seriously shaken Dill's support in the cities, nor would they have been effective in timber camps and mills. Workers were accustomed to hearing such charges. But farmers were very suspicious of politicians tied to the big city as Al Smith found in 1928. And it was in the country Dill lost heavily to Langlie. Then too, there was the question of Dill's "radical" politics, the mention of which was meant to remind voters of his obstructionist voting record during World War I. It would appear that this argument too, might carry more weight in the wheat fields of eastern Washington than in the labor halls of Seattle, as there was greater inclination amongst labor to view the Great War as a capitalist's money-making scheme. Finally one must remember that FDR's farm program under the Agricultural Adjustment Administration simply never solved America's farm problem. As a Democrat, Dill would have borne some of the anger farmers were feeling. However, Democrat Mon Wallgren won in his bid for the Senate, and FDR himself was victorious in Washington; so it would seem that the nature of Langlie's campaign - featuring his "machine" charges and Goss's aspersions on Dill's record - was the primary factor in the Democrat's defeat.

⁹¹Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 79-80.

⁹²Ibid., 79.

Analysts also believed the Dill forces had been overconfident.⁹³ There is probably some truth to this hypothesis. Before the election Dill had presumptuously included in his account of his life for "Who's Who In America" the claim that he had been elected Washington's governor in 1940.⁹⁴ Overconfidence may account for Dill's reluctance to respond to Langlie's "machine" charges with the requisite vigor. Not until the last week of the campaign did Dill consistently and energetically rebut Langlie's assertions.

But none of the above would matter if Dill could find just a few thousand more votes than Langlie in the absentee ballots. It was not to be, as the absentee ballots were counted Langlie's lead increased.⁹⁵ Nine days after the election his total was 3,917 greater than Dill's.⁹⁶ Langlie's election was certain.

However, the fight would not end. Democratic officials charged that a substantial number of ballots marked for the straight Democratic ticket had also been marked for Langlie. They argued the ballots were thus illegal.⁹⁷ But upon further reflection party officials refused to press the issue, leaving any action up to Dill.⁹⁸ Shortly after the election, he had left for the East to enjoy a visit with his mother in Ohio.⁹⁹ Upon his return home to Spokane late in November, he

⁹³Seattle P-I, 10 November 1940, 11.

⁹⁴Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 78.

⁹⁵Seattle Times, 13 November 1940, 1.

⁹⁶Seattle P-I, 14 November 1940, 6.

⁹⁷Wenatchee Daily World, 15 November 1940, 1. Seattle Times, 15 November 1940, 1.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 18 November 1940, 1.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 21 November 1940, 1.

announced there would be no challenge to the will of the people.¹⁰⁰ Langlie's assassination of Dill's character had been just effective enough to insure the Republican's election.

The two candidates had their own theories as to why Langlie won. Dill believed he had attacked Martin too enthusiastically in the primary thus alienating enough Democrats to cost him the election.¹⁰¹ Langlie believed that his charges of machine politics had moved what he called the "respectable people" of organized labor into his camp.¹⁰² Both men's opinions have merit. The Democrats were not united in 1940. Dill's rapprochement with Martin did not heal all wounds or cover differences in ideology; and as noted above labor was in the midst of a bitter struggle between the AFL and CIO for control of the American union movement. Nevertheless, Dill's startling losses in Central Washington seem determinative due to the fact that he was accustomed to strong showings in that region.

There is no record of Dill's emotions regarding his defeat, but his trip to Ohio after the campaign must surely be seen as an attempt to put it all behind him, to forget. In his memoirs he wrote, after much time had passed, that he came to believe he had a bigger job to do.¹⁰³ In the meantime he returned to Spokane, his law practice, his new cliff-side home, and mountain stream trout.

On December 7, 1941 the Japanese government altered the course of American history, and drastically changed the lives of all Americans. Many,

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 27 November 1940, 5.

¹⁰¹Seattle P. I. 5 July 1948.

¹⁰²Scott, "Arthur B. Langlie," 74.

¹⁰³Dill, Where Water Falls, 218.

especially women, took jobs which they would not otherwise have done, or engaged in charity work which they might not have considered, had the war not brought a sense of urgency and importance to the most mundane tasks, not to mention a severe labor shortage. Clarence Dill was no exception to this desire to serve. After his defeat in the gubernatorial race of 1940, he was through with politics - at least that was his determination at the time - but the war and President Roosevelt changed his mind.

FDR asked Dill to run for Congress in the Fifth district in 1942. The President believed his Democratic support in Congress was in jeopardy; he also wanted to be sure a public power man represented that district; finally, he believed Dill could win in spite of growing Republican sentiment.¹⁰⁴ The idea appealed to Clarence because it provided a means for a very patriotic man to serve his country in time of crisis. In fact, at one point in the campaign Dill remarked that it was the war alone which brought him into the race.¹⁰⁵

In the 1942 Fifth district congressional primary, Max Etter, Joseph Drumheller and Clarence Dill fought each other for the congressional seat Charles Leavy (D) had left for a federal judgeship.¹⁰⁶ Of course Dill's opponents campaigned against his World War I voting record, but to no avail.¹⁰⁷ In the general election Dill faced Walt Horan, a public-power Republican. Thus one of Clarence's primary reasons for running no longer existed. Still, he campaigned on

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Spokesman-Review, 21 October 1942, 6.

¹⁰⁶Wenatchee Daily World, 26 October 1942, 5.

¹⁰⁷Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the Primary Election held September 8, 1942 (Olympia: Government Printing Office). Spokesman-Review, 25 August 1942, 6. *ibid.*, 9 September 1942, 1.

the theme that his familiarity with Washington D.C. and relationship with Roosevelt would maximize the Fifth district's chances for war-based industrial development. Dill was still a builder at heart. Moreover, his argument concerning his ability to help the Fifth district grow was made more powerful in light of the fact Horan had never held elective office.¹⁰⁸

Horan's campaign was well suited to wartime. He hammered away at Dill's World War I activities and called him an obstructionist in regard to his voting record on major war issues in 1917-18.¹⁰⁹ It was not an unfair characterization. Other than that, Horan's campaign demonstrated why he had failed in earlier attempts to win office. His effort was unimaginative and extremely vague, consisting of little more than platitudes and flag waving: the normal campaign tactics in wartime.¹¹⁰ He described votes for him as votes for the American cause against the enemy.¹¹¹ Indeed the war overwhelmed the political process. An A-P story caught the mood of the country, and the irony of it:

Washington state voters this week continued to display an unprecedented lack of interest in the issues and candidates upon which they must decide at the general election November 3.

Like the electorate nationally, the Washington voters apparently were so occupied with the war effort - to safeguard free elections and the other prerogatives of free peoples - that they had little surplus energy or time for interesting themselves in one of the prerogatives for which they were fighting.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 13 October 1942, 8. Wenatchee Daily World, 31 October 1942, 3.

¹⁰⁹Spokesman-Review, 7 October 1942, 7.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Wenatchee Daily World, November 1942, 1.

¹¹²Ibid., 26 October 1942, 5.

Conventional political wisdom decrees that a light voter turnout favors the Republican candidate. But the Republicans were not content to leave any tactic in the bag in their effort to defeat their old nemesis, Clarence Dill. They were so impressed with the use they had made of Albert Goss in the governor's race of 1940 that they decided to repeat the tactic in the Fifth district congressional race of 1942. Just days before the election Goss again slammed Dill's role in the effort to build Grand Coulee Dam.

Dill responded forcefully:

I stand second to none in giving credit to Judge Hill [Sam Hill, congressman from the Fifth district and Washington's leader in the fight for congressional approval of Grand Coulee in 1935] for the work he did in the building of Grand Coulee dam.

The big question now is not who should have the most credit for building the dam, but which candidate for Congress now can obtain priorities for additional generators to produce the power running to waste there and get appropriations for power lines to distribute the power at cost...

Until I induced the president to take the daring step of allocating that first 63 million, the Grand Coulee bill never had a chance of being considered in either the house or senate.¹¹³

He went on, giving credit to FDR and all the others who had made Grand Coulee possible. Goss's effort to deny him the credit he deserved for his role in the building of Grand Coulee had been more than he could take without responding as he did.

It requires no intricate logic to argue Dill would have been the better choice that November, but it was not to be. Horan won easily, following the state and national trend of Republican rejuvenation.¹¹⁴ Nor need analysts work

¹¹³Ibid., 2 November 1942, 6.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 5 November 1942, 1. Wenatchee Daily World, 4 November 1942, 1. Ibid., 5 November 1942, 7. Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes Polled in the State of Washington at the General Election Held November 3, 1942

overtime to discover the cause of Dill's defeat. Republicans throughout the district had made Dill's World War One voting record the primary issue.¹¹⁵ Thus his work in Congress during the last war was well known - he was not the man northeastern Washington felt comfortable with in representing their interests in Washington D.C. during war.¹¹⁶ War is the most powerful of stimulants; Dill never had a chance to return to Congress in 1942, it may just as well have been 1918.

Clarence Dill was nothing if not resilient. He would find a way to serve the region he had come to love, to call home. In so doing he would return to an old friend, the Columbia River, and help open a new frontier. In the meantime, he returned to his home in Spokane, his legal practice, and made some money.

(Olympia: Government Printing Office).

¹¹⁵Spokesman-Review, 7 October 1942, 7. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1942, 8. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1942, 2. *Ibid.* 17 October 1942, 7. *Ibid.*, 4 September 1942, n.p. Wenatchee Daily World, 14 October 1942, 2.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, November 1942, 1.

A USEFUL LIFE

After his defeat in the congressional race of 1942, Dill enjoyed considerable success in his private law practice in Spokane. He often represented eastern Washington PUD's and was considered an expert in that area of law. With the demands that war made on Grand Coulee and Bonneville power, it was fairly obvious that if some method could be devised to restrain the Columbia's flood waters - which roared unproductively over the great dam's spillway in spring and summer - for release in the fall and winter when the river was low, power production would be substantially enhanced. Clarence Dill devoted a substantial portion of the next twenty years of his life in an effort to harness those flood waters.

As early as 1940, Dill began advocating the building of flood storage dams in Canada, especially at a place known as Arrow Lakes, which would hold the excess water until needed. He was also a firm supporter of a Columbia Valley Authority modeled after the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹ But the idea did not gain enough support amongst Westerners. After the war, he became more vocal in his support of Canadian storage, and often mentioned the concept during the many opportunities he had to speak publicly. Nevertheless, his voice remained unaccompanied for several years. He described his singular agitation for Canadian storage dams at the time as reminding him of John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness.²

Eventually, that voice found listeners. Governor Mon Wallgren appointed

¹Clarence Dill's speech before the Ephrata Chamber of Commerce, 6 December 1944, CDP.

²Dill, Where Water Falls, 220.

Dill to the Columbia Basin Commission in time for that body's January 1947 meeting in Wenatchee. At the meeting, Dill outlined the basics of his Canadian storage plan and persuaded the commission to pass a resolution encouraging the International Joint Commission to complete its survey and report on the feasibility of the project.³ In addition, the CBC made clear its support of the project on the basis of sharing the power with Canada which Canadian storage dams would generate on the lower Columbia.⁴

In the meantime, Dill wrote letters to any person conceivably interested in Canadian storage. His letter to S. R. Weston, chairman of the British Columbia Power Commission, was typical. Dill urged Weston and his commission to meet with the CBC in order to discuss the project.⁵ In January 1948, the Canadians responded to the overtures of the CBC announcing:

Canadians are perfectly willing to trade 100,000 acres of water storage in the upper and lower lakes in exchange for low cost hydroelectric power from the United States.⁶

Moreover, the IJC had canvassed the area which the new dam would have affected and found strong support among local Canadians for the project.⁷

³Wenatchee Daily World, 8 January 1947, 1,10. The International Joint Commission consisted of three Canadians and three Americans appointed by their respective governments to resolve differences between the two nations, which generally had to do with rivers and lakes.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Clarence Dill to S. R. Weston, 3 June 1947, CDP. Numerous letters in Box 6, Folder "Public Power," from and to Dill in the late forties and early fifties prove he led the effort in this period to arrange Canadian storage.

⁶Wenatchee Daily World, 29 January 1948, 1.

⁷Ibid.

Dill now began keeping Senator Warren Magnuson informed of the efforts of the CBC in regard to Canadian storage.⁸ He also took the liberty of advising Magnuson on his political standing and prophesied Truman might surprise a few people in the fall of 1948.⁹ Magnuson always showed the 63 year old Dill the greatest respect and in August 1948 assured him of his support for the Canadian storage project.¹⁰

In July 1948, Dill had attended a hearing before the IJC at Bonners Ferry, Idaho, at which the two nations discussed a possible flood control dam at Libby, Montana. Dill was impressed with how the two nations were working together to solve flood problems. It was a false impression.

Dill related to Magnuson how he had been working with members of British Columbia's Parliament in an effort to persuade them to propose a storage dam at Arrow Lakes. He hoped British Columbia would propose the project to the IJC. Dill explained to Magnuson his belief the project could be approved on the basis of a trade of power rights for flood storage. He also emphasized what the agreement would mean to the Columbia Basin:

They can store 10 million acre feet in the Arrow Lakes without serious damage. That, in addition to the storage in Montana and Idaho, would mean that we could install a third set of nine generators at Coulee by a short tunnel around the east bank of the river. Then the dam would produce 3 million KWH instead of 2 million. Every other dam down the

⁸Clarence Dill to Warren Magnuson, 11 February 1948, Magnuson Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

⁹Clarence Dill to Warren Magnuson, 22 June 1948, Magnuson Collection.

¹⁰Warren Magnuson to Clarence Dill, 2 August 1948, Magnuson Collection.

river would of course benefit to the same extent.¹¹

Magnuson now promised to contact the IJC and touch base with President Truman.¹² Then, discovering there was an opening on the American side of the IJC, Magnuson recommended Dill for the position. He wrote of Dill:

I think his suggestion [Canadian storage] is an excellent one. He is able, well versed in these matters and would be a definite asset to the commission. I am sure Senators Stanley and McWhorter would be more than pleased to have him as an associate. Approximately half of the problems of the commission arise in our area and are directly connected with power. Senator Dill is very well informed and qualified to deal with these questions.

Such an appointment would be well received in the Senate and would meet with considerable enthusiasm from the thousands of persons in our area, who are vitally interested in power and its further development.¹³

Though Truman did not appoint Dill to the IJC, he continued his work for Canadian storage. In December 1948, C. E. Webb, a Canadian power engineer, advocated waiting for the report of the International Columbia River Engineering Board and Committee (ICREBC) concerning flood water storage at Arrow Lakes before approaching the IJC with the project. Dill was little short of incensed. He wrote to Webb explaining the delay that waiting on the report would mean. The power shortage in the winter of 1948-1949 gave rise to Clarence's emotion. Northwesterners were being asked to curtail use of electricity at peak hours, turn-

¹¹Clarence Dill to Warren Magnuson, 28 July 1948, Magnuson Collection.

¹²Warren Magnuson to Clarence Dill, 10 September 1948, Magnuson Collection.

¹³Warren Magnuson to Matthew Connelly, secretary to the President, 10 September 1948. Matthew Connelly to Warren Magnuson, 13 September 1948, Magnuson Collection.

off unnecessary lights, and cook meals at unusual hours. The BPA even cut 82,000 KW to aluminum plants, and emergency power was transported from Montana. Even so, generators were blowing out due to overload. Nor were prospects bright for new power sources over the next four years. Canadian storage represented the quickest solution.¹⁴

In January 1949, Dill traveled to Victoria B.C. to speak with Premier Byron Johnson about Canadian storage. He reported Johnson was willing to study the proposal in detail. Dill hoped to gain the Premier's support prior to appearing before the IJC. However, Johnson withheld his outright support of the project but did ask the IJC to expedite the ICREBC report. The Dill-led CBC now pressured the political representatives of the Pacific Northwest to get behind the project and urge the IJC to pressure the ICREBC to expedite its study of the project.¹⁵ It was at this meeting Dill first mentioned the idea of splitting the power Canadian storage dams would create on the lower Columbia on a fifty-fifty basis with Canada as payment for flood water storage.¹⁶

Dill's campaign had apparently earned the approval of a majority of the people in the Arrow Lakes region.¹⁷ Local politicians such as A. D. Turnbull were anxious to meet with the Washingtonian and offer support. While Dill welcomed

¹⁴Clarence Dill to C. E. Webb, 30 December 1948, Arthur B. Langlie Collection, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

¹⁵Spokesman-Review, 10 January 1941, 1. In this article the Spokesman-Review, seldom an admirer of Dill's, gives the ex-senator credit for advancing the Canadian storage proposal.

¹⁶Wenatchee Daily World, 7 January 1949, 1. Clarence Dill to Hugh Mitchell, 11 January 1949, Hugh Mitchell Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

¹⁷Byron Johnson to Clarence Dill, 14 January 1949, CDP.

the encouragement from the Arrow Lakes area, he was perfectly willing to take the project anywhere on the Columbia the engineers would build it. Arrow Lakes just seemed the most logical place to an old politician.¹⁸

As British Columbian officials studied the project, they became convinced a dam above Revelstoke - further north than Arrow Lakes - would have less of an environmental impact.¹⁹

Dill continued to write letters, bend ears, and generally agitate for the project but was frustrated by the lack of progress.²⁰ Though study of the projected site above Revelstoke went forward, the ex-Senator lamented that what was really needed was for:

the B.C. power commission or some privately owned organization, with the approval of the B.C. government, would offer to store five million acre feet somewhere in the upper Columbia. Dr. Raver, Bonneville Power Administrator, has repeatedly said he would be glad to enter into negotiations for an agreement satisfactory to British Columbia and the governments of Washington and Ottawa, to be submitted to the IJC for approval.²¹

Months passed. Dill wrote Magnuson in September 1951 that the project was not as complicated as the Canadians had led President Truman to believe. All that was

¹⁸Clarence Dill to Jack Gorrie, 2 August 1950, Jack Gorrie Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle. A. D. Turnbull to Clarence Dill, 3 August 1949, CDP.

¹⁹Clarence Dill to J. B. Thompson, 5 December 1950. Clarence Dill to William Warne, 8 January 1951, CDP.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹"Columbia's Storage Possibilities Would Develop Tremendous Energy," Construction World (July 1951): 20.

needed was an incentive to move the Premier of British Columbia off dead center. "How about if we loan them the money to build the dam?" Dill suggested to Magnuson.²² For Clarence, the war in Korea was distracting people from important projects. Dill also wrote to Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman in October 1951 in an effort to promote Canadian storage. The secretary responded the IJC was considering half-a-dozen projects, none of which could be isolated and quickly advanced. Canadian storage was just one of the projects.²³ On the American side, Dill's ideas were gaining popularity as brown outs increased. Moreover, Army engineers claimed the Vanport flood of 1948 would have been substantially reduced if flood control dams had been in existence.²⁴ Still, the Department of the Interior advised patience and essentially abdicated responsibility.²⁵ Dill, a man of great patience, was now running out. He advised the secretary that perhaps the project would be furthered by direct negotiations between the two countries. As far as Dill was concerned the IJC was a frustrating waste of time.²⁶

Nothing Clarence attempted pushed Canadian storage along. Two years

²²Clarence Dill to Warren Magnuson, 10 September 1951, CDP.

²³Oscar Chapman to Clarence Dill, 22 October 1951, CDP.

²⁴Wenatchee Daily World, 13 December 1951, n.p. Vanport, Oregon was a planned community built during W.W.II to house workers from Henry Kaiser's shipyards. During the war it had a population of 35,000 people, second in size among Oregon's cities only to Portland. Vanport was built on the lowlands near the Columbia river between Portland and Vancouver. In the flood of 1948 a dike gave way and Vanport was swept away never to be rebuilt. Sixteen people died in the flood. Dodds, The American Northwest, 266, 275-276. Schwantes, The Pacific Northwest, 332.

²⁵Oscar Chapman to Clarence Dill, 19 January 1952, CDP.

²⁶Clarence Dill to Oscar Chapman, 25 January 1952, CDP.

later he was still working for the project. He had managed to interest officials in Victoria in his idea of trading a percentage of power generated by the released flood waters for the storage of those waters. Dill had not suggested a percentage to the B.C. officials, but was in the process of contacting various PUD's in Washington and the BPA to ascertain their response.²⁷ Still the governments could not get together.

Dill now tried an end run. He spent more than a year in an effort to convince private firms to build a dam at Arrow Lakes on the basis of contracts with PUD's in Washington and the BPA. The BPA and the PUD's were to pay the owner of the Canadian storage dams for the increased power generated by the flood waters released through those dams. While Dill's proposal would still require permits of various kinds from the governments involved, he believed it was a considerably more simple route than having the Canadians build the dam. Dill actually gained tentative agreement from the BPA and several PUD's, and found some businesses initially interested in building the dams.²⁸ But one by one they all fell through.²⁹ Finally, he persuaded Kaiser Aluminum of Spokane to build Arrow Lakes Dam.³⁰ But the Canadian government would have none of it. The Parliament in Ottawa passed a law making it illegal for a foreign company to build a dam on an international stream without its consent. There were no Canadian

²⁷Clarence Dill to Glenn Smothers, 12 January 1954. Clarence Dill to William Schempp, 13 January 1954, CDP.

²⁸Clarence Dill to the commissioners of Grant County PUD #1, 22 December 1954, CDP

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Dill, Where Water Falls, 222.

firms willing to undertake the project; the only alternative lay with governments.³¹

Three more years passed while Dill pushed Canadian storage whenever possible. New dams were being built on the Columbia making the potential pay-off for flood waters released at the proper time even greater. In the fall of 1957, Dill proposed to go to Washington D.C. and discover if there would be a favorable response to dividing power generated from stored flood waters in Canada on a 50 percent basis.³² He intended to lay his idea of a fifty percent split before Eisenhower's Secretary of Interior Frederick A. Seaton. He was also working the Canadian side. In November 1957 he sent a proposal to the British Columbian government outlining his fifty-fifty split idea.³³ It should be noted that Dill was now under contract to the Grant County PUD for his work on Canadian storage. Should Dill's efforts succeed in securing Canadian storage dams, his contract with Grant County would have been very lucrative.³⁴

Dill's proposal seemed to attract little attention from either government. But in July 1958, the IJC undertook a fact-finding mission on the Columbia River. General McNaughton of the Canadian contingent publicly scoffed at the idea of Canadian storage, saying the United States had little to offer in return. McNaughton was probably pessimistic because the United States had not been thrilled with his suggestion that Grand Coulee be raised forty two feet.³⁵ Still, the

³¹Ibid., 223.

³²Clarence Dill to Lloyd McKenzie, 21 August 1957, CDP.

³³Proposal from Clarence Dill to the government of British Columbia, Canada for a fifty-fifty division of power to be produced from stored flood waters, 20 November 1957, CDP.

³⁴Spokesman-Review, 8 October 1970, 14. Ibid., 27 April 1971, n.p.

³⁵Wenatchee Daily World, 30 July 1958, 1.

IJC was at least looking at Dill's nearly two-decade old proposal.

Time was beginning to catch up with the man once regarded as the handsomest man in the Senate. In those days he had sported a Gable-esq mustache. In 1958 he preferred to send out pictures of himself - when speaking engagements so required - which were representative of a younger Clarence Dill. He joked about this "vain" proclivity in a letter to a friend. He was seventy four.³⁶

Though Dill felt himself losing a little strength as age pressed upon him, his Canadian storage proposal, along with his idea to split the run-off power fifty-fifty, was gaining it.³⁷ American and Canadian officials were finally discussing a flood water storage agreement in earnest. The only down side was that they were taking the project out of the hands of the man who had agitated for it for so long. However, it must have been gratifying for Dill to read - when the IJC agreement was made public - that one of the key provisions in the agreement was "the power added to downstream dams would be split fifty-fifty between the two countries."³⁸ The United States and Canada concluded negotiations on the storage issue on 18 October 1960. President Eisenhower announced the agreement from Palm Springs, California, and indicated he intended to send the treaty to the Senate in January 1961.³⁹ The treaty called for the storage of over fifteen million acre feet of water behind Canadian dams, enough water to ensure that a third powerhouse at Grand Coulee would be economically feasible, as were more generators at other

³⁶Clarence Dill to Gus Norwood, 26 September 1958, Northwest Public Power Association Papers, Manuscript Division, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

³⁷William Dittmer to Clarence Dill, 8 December 1958, CDP.

³⁸Wenatchee Daily World, 5 January 1960, 4. Ibid., 17 August 1960, 4.

³⁹Ibid., 19 October 1960, 1.

dams.⁴⁰

There were several benefits from the agreement. Power production at Grand Coulee from Canadian storage would increase as much as 50%. The key to this downstream power bonanza was to be the giant dam at Mica Creek - two hundred miles north of the international border. Preliminary plans called for a seven hundred and forty foot high dam at the Mica Creek location.⁴¹ Engineers also predicted half of the storage benefit could be functional by 1965.⁴² But perhaps the greatest benefit from the treaty was that it meant the Columbia would no longer send its waters rampaging into farm lands and cities downstream. The Canadian storage dams would help hold the river's excess while it was still peaceful.⁴³

When the United States Senate received the bill, little time was wasted in discussion. Hearings were held but they were little more than a formality. However, they did provide the opportunity for one of the builders of the Pacific Northwest to speak formally before senators one more time. Dill seemed to enjoy the opportunity to relate how he had worked on the project for so long, and how he had hit upon his fifty-fifty idea. He made the point that this treaty would allow for the completion of Columbia River development that he, James O'Sullivan, FDR, and so many others had struggled so long to accomplish. The senators addressed the now gray-haired river advocate as "Senator" and allowed Dill to read a rather lengthy recount of the battle for Grand Coulee and the hope for the

⁴⁰Ibid., 21 October 1960, 6.

⁴¹Ibid., 12 January 1960, 1.

⁴²Ibid., 20 October 1960, 1.

⁴³Ibid. Ibid., 23 October 1960, 4.

Columbia Basin.⁴⁴ The treaty was approved 90 to 1. What Senator Wallace Bennett (Rep. Utah) was thinking in his dissent is apparently lost to history.⁴⁵

However, the Canadians found the treaty more susceptible to criticism. Though how being paid to build dams they would ultimately need anyway could provide a forum for dispute is difficult to discern, nevertheless, the Canadians disputed. The problem lay with the conservative government of British Columbia under Premier W. A. C. Bennett.⁴⁶ It should come as no surprise - given the drawn out nature of the Canadian storage agreement to this time - that the disagreement between British Columbia and its own federal government caused a delay of nearly three years in finalizing the accord. Apparently, British Columbia wanted to sell its share of the power to the United States for cash, with which it would build the storage dams. The Canadian federal government offered to finance the project but Bennett would not hear of it. Eventually British Columbia got its way.

The final agreement called for the United States to buy British Columbia's half of the new electrical power created by the storage dams. The United States also paid for flood control benefits.⁴⁷ Finally, the treaty passed the Canadian Parliament. President Lyndon Johnson attended the ceremony in Blaine, Washington honoring Canadian\American cooperation in the West. Canadian

⁴⁴Dill's speech before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 8 March 1961, CDP.

⁴⁵Wenatchee Daily World, 24 March 1961, 11.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 6 August 1961, 4.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 10 July 1963, 15. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1963, 3. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1964, 1.

storage and Clarence Dill's hope for the Columbia Basin became reality.⁴⁸

While Dill spent a significant amount of time on the Canadian storage project, he also had a successful law practice in Spokane. During the forties, fifties, and sixties, Dill's practice centered around his work for various eastern Washington PUD's. Beginning in 1961, he represented Pend O'reille County PUD in its fight with the city of Seattle over the Z Canyon dam site in northeastern Washington.⁴⁹ Pend O'reille County PUD owned the Z Canyon dam site and intended to build a dam there, though the PUD had experienced difficulty raising the funds to proceed. In 1961, Seattle filed an application with the Federal Power Commission for a dam site at a place known as Boundary, about one mile down river from Z Canyon. If Seattle were allowed to build Boundary dam, the Z Canyon site would be put under water and thus be worthless for power production.⁵⁰

On 10 July 1961, the FPC ruled in favor of Seattle and granted a license to build Boundary dam.⁵¹ Pend O'reille County PUD filed a lawsuit claiming state law prohibited a municipality from condemning the property of a PUD (in order for Seattle to build Boundary dam the PUD's Z Canyon site would be required for water storage).⁵² The state Superior Court ruled in April 1963 that the commerce

⁴⁸Ibid., 11 June 1964, 1. Ibid., 13 September 1964, 7. Ibid., 17 September 1964, 2. Spokesman-Review, 18 December 1972, n.p.

⁴⁹Clarence Dill to Alfred Schweppe, 12 September 1961, CDP.

⁵⁰Billington, Politics and Public Power, 432.

⁵¹Order Modifying and Adopting Presiding Examiners Initial Decision Issuing License For Project Number 2144 (Boundary Dam), 10 July 1961, CDP.

⁵²Affidavit of Clarence C. Dill concerning Robert Beezer versus the City of Seattle, No. 576444, Superior Court for the State of Washington, King County (1961). CDP.

clause of the federal Constitution took precedence over the state law barring a municipality from condemning the property of a PUD.⁵³ However, the court did not consider the case frivolous or a lawyer's money-making scheme as Ken Billington - a historian of public power in Washington - asserts in People, Politics, and Public Power.⁵⁴ In fact, the judge went out of his way to commend council for both parties. Pend O'reille County appealed the court's decision and lost. Eventually Boundary Dam was built.

Clarence Dill's fight for Canadian storage is symbolic of the man. He made a comfortable living through his law practice, much of his work coming from PUD's. But he began his campaign for Canadian storage as a project which would primarily benefit others and as something to do in his spare time. From more efficient electrical production to flood control, the project had many positive aspects. Through the forties and well into the fifties, the idea remained for Dill one which would primarily benefit his fellow Pacific Northwesterners. In fact, it cost him a considerable amount of money and time to sustain his agitation for the project. Contrary to most of the West's entrepreneurs, who usually figured a profitable angle before they began a project, Dill did not figure his until the project entered the stage in the mid-fifties when he was trying to arrange for an agreement between various PUD's, the BPA, and a private builder. At this time he entered into a contract with Grant County PUD, and possibly other PUD's, which would have paid him on a per kilowatt basis for achieving Canadian storage. While Dill played a significant role in promoting the project, he had faded from the main picture by the time the treaty was actually put into operation in 1964.

⁵³Beezer versus City of Seattle, No. 576444 (1963). CDP.

⁵⁴Billington, People, Politics, and Public Power, 434.

Nevertheless, when the Canadian held waters actually increased power production on the Columbia river, he informed the Grant County PUD it was time to begin making payments. The PUD disagreed, thus followed a lawsuit between Dill and the PUD which caused some observers, especially Ken Billington, to perceive the aging senator as a money grubbing old has-been, largely out to enrich himself at the expense of the public.⁵⁵ The courts did not view the case as simplistically as Billington. After several years of litigation, Dill and Grant County PUD agreed to settle for a \$20,000 payment to Dill.⁵⁶ Apparently the court agreed with Clarence's contention that he had played a significant role in bringing about the treaty. Certainly the Spokesman-Review agreed with the court as it specifically gave Dill credit for promoting the Canadian storage project.⁵⁷

While Dill played a prominent role in promoting the project, it is going too far to suggest he accomplished it. His work was largely done in the fifties, except for testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1961. Certainly those who negotiated the project between 1960 and 1964 were the ones responsible for the reality of the Canadian storage project. Nevertheless, Dill espoused the idea when few were listening and put the concept of Canadian storage in the public domain. For that, he deserves the thanks of those who benefit from the increased power, flood control, and irrigation Canadian storage generates.

Clarence Dill was a prime example of a man who never quite reached his angle of repose in the conflict between making money and serving others. He truly

⁵⁵Billington, People, Politics, and Public Power, 432-435.

⁵⁶Spokesman-Review, 27 April 1971, n.p.

⁵⁷Ibid., 12 June 1964, n.p.

had a desire to help other people. That was the basis of his progressivism. But he also wanted to make a dollar, to build something. That was why he left the Ohio farm and came West. When he decided to leave the Senate, one of the reasons he gave was that he did not want to die a poor broken down old man like Wesley Jones (Jones had been Washington's senior senator when he served with Dill in the twenties and early thirties; he died shortly after being defeated for reelection in 1932). Dill wanted to make some money, find security. Discovering that fairly easy to do, he tried to go back into politics in 1940 and was barely defeated. Eventually he found an outlet for his desire to help, to build: Canadian storage. The fact that his storage plan eventually became a method to make money just proved the genius of the American system to Clarence Dill; the fact that making money on his plan for Canadian storage did not bother him, just made him human.

EPILOGUE

In March 1969 Mabel Dill died of heart failure at the Dill's Spokane home. She was only 63.¹ Dill had always imagined that he would be the first to die; he was devastated. On one occasion he told Ken Billington, "I pray each day that I will not awaken. My wife is gone; my brother is taken care of; any other living relative is of no avail."² Dill spoke these words to Billington in relation to his desire to establish a trust fund which would award yearly prizes to high school students for outstanding achievement in public speaking or debate. The trust fund was established as Dill desired. However his prayer was not answered in the timely fashion he had hoped for. He lived nearly nine more years from his wife's death in 1969 until his own death on January 15, 1978 at the age of 93.

Dill had retired too early from the Senate and lived too long afterward for his death to receive a great amount of attention. However, extended obituaries did appear in the state's major papers which mentioned his work on radio legislation and on Columbia Basin development. By the time of his death, most Washingtonians were probably not impressed that he had been the Senate's driving force behind radio legislation in the 1920's and early 30's. They simply could not relate to what radio had meant to the people of that era. The idea that listening to radio helped bring the nation closer together and began to unify east and west in a cultural and psychological manner that had not previously existed would never have occurred to most of those who read his obituary in 1978. The vast majority of us live in the modern world without possessing an understanding of how that world was made possible. Dill played a significant role in shaping our reality.

¹Wenatchee Daily World, 23 March 1969.

²Billington, People, Politics, and Public Power, 435.

It is not too much to say that Clarence Dill was one of the first modern senators. He understood the future and necessary course of the federal government's relationship to commerce, especially commerce based on new technology, in a way that few of his peers did. Indeed, the Supreme Court demonstrated the gulf between future and past, between Dill and his learned contemporaries on the bench, when it adopted an interpretation of interstate commerce in the Schechter case of 1935 that FDR caustically described as a "horse and buggy" definition.³ Dill's colleagues, even those who supported his radio legislation, admitted they knew little concerning the ramifications of radio technology or radio law. They simply supported Dill because public clamor for legislation was so great.

Most Washingtonians reading Dill's obituary were probably surprised to learn of his role in bringing about construction of Grand Coulee Dam and development of the Columbia River. Many have seen the dam, and all of us benefit from the power and irrigation water it provides, thus the sense of appreciation for that element of Dill's work would have been greater amongst those who read of his accomplishments. Nevertheless, we all more or less take for granted the benefits the Columbia River dams provide. Some of us do this even to the extent of arguing they be dismantled. But for the vast majority of Pacific Northwesterners the benefits the dams provide - flood prevention, water storage and irrigation, electric power, prevention of soil erosion, extended transportation, recreation, and market development - far outweigh their negative aspects, which we will hopefully continue to work to mitigate.⁴

³Freidel, Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny, 163.

⁴Lowitt, The New Deal and the West, 157.

But we do see the dams differently than Dill's generation. Murray Morgan wrote of Grand Coulee in 1954:

There are parts of our culture that stink with phoniness. But we can do some wonderful things too. That dam is one of them. If our generation has anything good to offer history, it is that dam. Why, the thing is going to be completely useful. It is going to be a working pyramid.⁵

We no longer think of the dams in those terms. For us they are tools, not wonders, tools which require constant adjustments and maintenance. Perhaps one of the reasons we do not share our forebears' enthusiasm is because we are desensitized to amazing things in our culture due to their abundance; from medicine to entertainment we are constantly confronted with the near miraculous. Another reason for our lack of amazement at the Columbia's dams is that they are not visually inspiring, not even Grand Coulee. Stewart Holbrook wrote of this paradox in The Columbia:

It is big alright, but it has to contend with too much space to look big. Set in the midst of appalling distances, it appears like a play dam of children, lost in the terrifying wastes...⁶

Just as the vast landscape diminishes our appreciation for Grand Coulee, the passage of time diminishes our appreciation for Dill and the others who developed the Columbia River. I suppose this is as it should be; we need to make room to honor those who make new contributions to life in this region. But why did Dill's contemporaries deny him, except for a brief period in 1934, the credit due him for his work in bringing Grand Coulee to reality? There are several reasons. One of them is that he occupied a unique and pioneering niche in

⁵Morgan, The Dam, XVIII.

⁶Holbrook, The Columbia, 309.

Washington state politics. As far as the western part of the state was concerned he was an Easterner - not one of them - thus he didn't receive overly generous coverage from the large western papers. Moreover, he was something of an outcast in Spokane as well. As a Democrat, he was not particularly welcome among the Republican power brokers of that city. William H. Cowles, the publisher of the Inland Empire's dominant newspapers, was particularly venomous to Dill. Finally, the grass roots group centered in Ephrata and Wenatchee that had agitated for the dam since 1918 was leery of anything and anyone coming from Spokane - and with good reason usually - so that even when the whole project rested on Dill's relationship with FDR, they were suspicious that he would betray the dam. One of the leaders of this group, Rufus Woods, was a die hard Republican as well and publisher of central Washington's most important newspaper The Wenatchee Daily World. All things considered it is remarkable that Dill's importance in relation to Grand Coulee can be discerned from extant sources.

Just as there were those who denied Dill recognition for his work in developing the Columbia River, there are today those who criticize Dill and his generation for building dams in the first place. Donald Worster is one of the more articulate of these critics. He is an advocate of small community living, doing nothing more than the basics for survival. He writes:

Relieved of some of its [the West] burdens of growing crops, earning foreign exchange, and supporting immense cities, it might encourage a new sequence of history, an incipient America of simplicity, discipline, and spiritual exploration, an America in which people are wont to sit long hours doing nothing, earning nothing, going nowhere, on the banks of some river running through a spare lean land.⁷

⁷Worster, Rivers of Empire, 329-335.

For Worster, the dams, and the reclamation they made possible, epitomize the evils of the capitalist system in the West. His solution for the dilemma thus created is nothing less than the complete transformation of the nature of man. When water is scarce human beings as we know them, as history reveals them, respond quite differently than Worster's idyllic man. Stewart Holbrook described that response when he wrote, "...men fought, sued, and shot each other because of water. Communities warred and split because of water."⁸

Contrary to Worster, in the real West, populated with real people, irrigation was a prerequisite for survival. One either irrigated land in the arid regions or moved away. The very first white settler in the arid region of eastern Washington, Marcus Whitman, was possessed of his share of idealism but was practical enough to see the necessity of irrigation. There was no other way the land could support significant numbers of people.⁹ The fact of the West's aridity, then, was a significant factor in molding the lives of Westerners and their society. Wallace Stegner saw this clearly when he wrote of the West's pioneers, "Most of the changes in people's lives - which I am quite sure in most of their lives were unintended - were forced upon them by the condition of aridity."¹⁰ In short, Worster, and those who believe as he does, have little concept of what life would really be like if they were to implement their philosophy and even less understanding of the human suffering that implementation would require.

Aridity, then, dictated the nature of life in much of the West in 1890, and is even more powerful today given the scarcity of good farmland. The need for

⁸Holbrook, The Columbia, 303.

⁹Ibid., 302-303.

¹⁰Stegner and Etulain, Conversations with Wallace Stegner, 147.

irrigation in the West, in Dill's *Inland Empire*, is a constant that ties the past to the present and makes us very much like our forebears. So too our dependence on electrical power. There are other continuities as well.

The West, in spite of assertions to the contrary, is still a place of open spaces and extended distances.¹¹ The task of those who came here before us was to conquer that wilderness, overcome the distance, in order to make a non-nomadic civilization possible. Our task may well be to preserve that wilderness in order to make temporary escape from the pressures of modern life possible. Thus the problem before us concerning the wilderness is very much different than that which our forebears faced. Let us not criticize our ancestors because they faced a different challenge.

The answer to our dilemma does not lie in disavowing the progress of the past as Donald Worster would have us do. He argues that the West is trapped by its past. Because of its reliance on irrigation, it is ruled over by a concentrated power hierarchy based on the command of scarce water. The great evil for Worster - after the capitalist economy - is irrigation and how it is used to allow a small group to dominate others and the land as well.¹² But surely it was not the dams and irrigation canals which were the catalyst for this alleged power structure, but the fact that water was scarce. To have not dammed and irrigated would not have changed the fact that whoever controlled the water possessed incredible power. It would only have meant concentrating a more limited resource in fewer hands, with the result of even fewer people living in arid areas. The problem is aridity, not man's four millennia old solution to it. Thus Worster continues in error

¹¹Ibid., 163.

¹²Worster, Rivers and Empire, 228-229.

when he writes that the basic problem is "the apparatus and ideology of unrestrained environmental conquest which lies at the root of the Joad's affliction."¹³

The people of Dill's generation, including the Joads of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, would not have understood Worster's solution to their problem. In fact they would have thought him crazy, for Worster has their affliction exactly backwards. Isn't the cause of the Joad's desperation the failure to control the dust bowl environment of Oklahoma? And didn't irrigation, far from being their nemesis in the West, offer them some hope that they might find a new home? Hasn't the West offered that new home to millions? And without irrigation where might those millions have gone? What would have become of them? Though it is true that only a small percentage of those who came west now live on an irrigated farm, all Westerners benefit from the cornucopia irrigation makes possible and from the power dams generate. Stegner analyzed correctly the role of irrigation and the federal government in the West when he said, "I think the West would have been impossible without federal intervention [which brought vast irrigation projects]."¹⁴ What might have happened to the country had not the West absorbed so many displaced persons in the thirties? Worster's "solutions" to society's problems do not address those problems: they eliminate the society. Though Stegner was no admirer of the modern West, he identified too closely with the West of his youth for that, he understood what irrigation meant to the region.¹⁵ And in that recognition he leads us to a more interesting question: how

¹³Ibid., 230.

¹⁴Stegner and Etulain, Conversations with Wallace Stegner, 175.

¹⁵Ibid., 90-91.

did the West come to be a region built, to a large extent, on irrigation?

The effort to irrigate extensive sections of western land was largely unsuccessful until the federal government passed the Newlands act in 1902. Under this act money derived from the sale of public lands in the West was to be used to construct irrigation projects. Land reclaimed through these projects was then to be sold in 160 acre parcels or less, depending on the needs of family farmers. The Newlands act was a significant milestone in the history of the region in that it marked the intrusion of the federal government into two of the defining elements of western life: water supply and agriculture. Out of the Newlands act came the Bureau of Reclamation which held in its hands the power to pass judgment on the hopes and dreams of Westerners. But even the federal government found conquering the vastness of the West a daunting challenge. The Newlands act failed to reclaim lands to the degree its proponents had envisioned.¹⁶

Thus intense development of the West's reclaimable lands did not begin until Franklin Roosevelt became President. When FDR spoke to the 20,000 people assembled at Grand Coulee on 4 August 1934 he recalled his Spokane speech of 1920 in which he had first mentioned development of the Columbia Basin.¹⁷ In 1934 he looked forward to vast development of the region, fully aware that New Deal dollars were coming west in disproportionate amounts. He pointed out to his Grand Coulee audience that, "...he had allocated to the three states, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho a 'much larger share of the public works than the

¹⁶Richard White, Its Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of The American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 405-406.

¹⁷Frank Freidel, "FDR in the Northwest: Informal Glimpses," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 76 (October 1985): 125.

population justifies."¹⁸ There were many reasons for this, but surely one of the reasons in the back of the President's mind was the fact that reclamation could provide homes and jobs for thousands of the nation's unemployed, once agricultural commodities returned a fair profit. FDR shared Thomas Jefferson's romantic notions concerning farm life. If he could put people on farms as part of the solution to the Great Depression he would do it.

Other reasons the West received New Deal dollars in disproportionate amounts were the extent of poverty and suffering in the region and the fact that many federal aid programs favored large sparsely populated areas.¹⁹ Donald Reading has made a fascinating study of this issue in which he argues that the federal government tended to spend money in states where it owned a higher percentage of land and where real per capita personal income had declined the sharpest.²⁰ Reading further argues that an important factor in determining whether or not new Deal funds would be spent in a state was the willingness of state and local units to set up machinery for the disbursement of such funds. Moreover, the vigor with which state officials lobbied for programs seems to have had a significant affect on the flow of funds.²¹ Reading is correct. Funds for Grand Coulee came to the Pacific Northwest because the region, led by Clarence Dill, lobbied so effectively for them and because Dill had placed himself in a persuasive position with the President.

¹⁸Ibid., 126.

¹⁹James Patterson, The New Deal in the West, 319.

²⁰Donald Reading, "New Deal Activity and the State," Journal of Economic History 33 (December 1973): 796,797,805.

²¹Ibid., 804.

One question remains: why were Westerners so determined to secure New Deal dollars? The answer has to do with the builder mentality so typical of the West in the first half of the twentieth century. Recognizing their region possessed vast resources but was underdeveloped, Western congressman and senators, Dill chief among them, went after New Deal dollars like Sooners after new land. The Washingtonian brought to his quest for Grand Coulee a long-term plan and a refusal to take no for an answer, in addition to an army of Westerners of the same mind. There was little of the squabbling that beset other regions over whether or not the West wanted Federal help. The peculiar western mind, then, had much to do with securing New Deal dollars, which in turn helped create the modern dam-based West.

In spite of the fact that the reclamation aspect of Grand Coulee did not become a reality until the 1950's, the Pacific Northwest benefited enormously from the other aspect of the project: cheap electricity. In the 1920's the Pacific Northwest was an economic and social hinterland, a colony. One could argue that the region's failure to gain a significant tariff on wood products in the late 1920's indicated that it was a political colony as well. Dill understood how the rest of the country was using the Pacific Northwest and how the immense Grand Coulee project could help develop the region.²² He saw clearly that cheap power and reclamation could help bring prosperity to the region and that prosperity would help make Washington more powerful politically. Indeed he fought for the project on the grounds that other parts of the nation were benefiting from large federal projects (Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee and Boulder Dam on the Colorado)

²²Congressional Record, (17 April 1928), vol., 69, pt. 6, 6597, 6598, 6600,6601. Dill was even convinced that vast trade with the Asia was there for the taking in some not too distant future.

while the Pacific Northwest was being rebuffed in regard to Grand Coulee.²³ Thus it was no surprise to Clarence Dill when the development of the Columbia River, especially Grand Coulee Dam, began a change in Washington's relationship to the rest of the country. The cheap and abundant electricity Grand Coulee provided made possible vast increases in manufacturing during World War II. Shipbuilding and aircraft construction, not to mention aluminum production, increased dramatically in the region as a result of the war, the latter two remain important aspects of the region's economy.

Then there is Hanford. Because of the vast open spaces and the existence of cheap electricity, southeastern Washington was a logical site for nuclear experimentation. One might argue Hanford was the price the Pacific Northwest paid to become an equal member of the Union. However we view Hanford, the nation's defense needs and the region's electrical power, combined with Boeing's commercial aircraft industry, have formed the backbone of the region's economy. It was no accident that in the third quarter of this century another senator from Washington, Henry Jackson, rose to the top echelons of the Senate as an expert on defense.

Clarence Dill was extremely proud of his region's importance, due largely to Grand Coulee, during the war. He smiled when he heard people say the great dam may have won World War II because it supplied the energy which produced the aluminum for 60% of America's planes.²⁴ He was prouder still of the region's increasing prosperity, made more evident with each passing decade. He accepted

²³Congress, House of Representatives, Committee On Irrigation And Reclamation, Hearings Before The Committee On Irrigation And Reclamation on H.R 7446, 72nd Congress, 1st session, 3 June 1932, 202-203.

²⁴Holbrook, The Columbia, 312.

completely the idea that development was good, that prosperity defined as a rising standard of living was a worthy goal. Thus he would have shaken his head in dismay at the trend in western literature which sees the present West as not worthy of the past, that the West of today has lost its allure, its romance.

We come, then, to Clarence Dill the man, and his contribution to Pacific Northwest History. In his prime Dill was an accomplished politician, adept at presenting a carefully crafted image to the public. An historian, however, must not allow a politician's image to obscure the man. He must look past the image in order to discover the person. As John Clive has written, history is "to a great extent a process of penetrating disguises and uncovering what is hidden."²⁵

Clarence Dill believed firmly in what Stegner calls "three of the American gospels: work, progress, and the inviolability of contract."²⁶ Though perhaps it is fair to say he believed in them in inverse order. On more than one occasion he sued for failure to fulfill a contract. Further demonstrating his commitment to the third part of Stegner's triune gospel, Dill was a lawyer and a politician. The work of both rests on the strength of the contracts they make. Nor did work scare the Methodist-raised Dill, though he learned early on that one hour with his nose behind the rear end of a mule was less enjoyable than two with his nose in a book. Then there is progress; Dill believed in three kinds of progress and came to believe that they might be mutually exclusive. First he believed in progressive political principles: the idea that government could and should make society better for the majority of people. Second he believed in progress for individuals, the people of his district and state. He wanted to see those people do better for themselves and

²⁵John Clive, Not By Fact Alone: Essays on the Writing and Reading of History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 106.

²⁶Stegner, Angle of Repose, 126.

the government do better by them. Finally he believed in progress for Clarence Dill; he didn't want to spend his life in public service and have little to show for it. Wesley Jones' defeat in 1932 and quick subsequent death profoundly affected Dill. From the time Dill chose to retire in 1934, and probably much earlier, to the end of his lawsuit against Pend O'reille County PUD over his Canadian storage work, Dill wrestled with the conflict between making money and serving the public interest.

There are other aspects of Dill's personality worth remembering, not least of which was his love for the Pacific Northwest, for his home. Dill loved eastern Washington with its azure sky, sparkling waters, and majestic landscape. Reminiscent of the first President Roosevelt, he loved to both hunt and fish; the outdoors was his sanctuary from politics and the place of his greatest work.

Dill was also a student of history, and though he studied it without great depth, he learned that change was a given in human society, thus there was no sense looking back to some mythical Golden Age, as many of his progressive brethren did. He believed in taking from the past what was useful - the solid principles and wisdom of men like Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln - and moving forward, progressing. In that ability Dill was unlike so many people both past and present, who partly as a result of their lack of historical perspective, are reluctant or unable to change or adapt to new realities. Without a knowledge of history many people know only their own life, thus they are prisoners of the present, afraid of what lies ahead. Dill was never afraid of the future.

Dill used history to provide a philosophical base for his politics, and material for his oratorical performances. The spoken word was his life-long love, but it was a blind romance. He did not notice when the oratorical style that had made the Great Commoner so popular, the style he had adopted as his own, lost

its ability to impress most Americans. One of the last things he did was set up high school prizes for oratorical achievement. The fact that he persisted in speaking in the oratorical style that had helped send him to the Senate in 1922, caused many later observers to esteem him lightly and believe he had significantly exaggerated his accomplishments. Indeed, for many he became the living stereotype of the old-time machine politician: tainted with graft, a blowhard, and a has-been; not the much more complicated political maverick presented in these pages. It is worth noting that those who remembered him as he had truly been, regarded him differently from those who knew him only in his later years. The correspondence between Dill and Warren Magnuson is full of the latter's respect for the old senator.

Nevertheless, Dill did feel the need to tell people of his accomplishments. Part of this need was rooted in his political personality: successful politicians must find a way to make their constituents aware of their accomplishments; but the greater cause of this aspect of Dill's personality was his unique position in the history of Washington state politics. Dill was nothing less than a pioneer in his own right, though his fields were the needs of the people of the West, rather than the fields of waving wheat which covered eastern Washington. He was a progressive Democrat in a state full of progressive Republicans and conservative Bourbons. This circumstance forced him to distance himself from the state's Democratic party in order to be able to appeal to enough progressive Republicans to get elected. The result was a state Democratic party which was always suspicious of its most prominent member in the 1920's and early 1930's. Seldom did the party credit Dill for his accomplishments. Adding to his isolation was the fact that he came from the east side of the state. Washington's major newspapers - along with most of the population - were located in the Puget Sound area. These

newspapers, almost always Republican in sympathy, tended to ignore the rest of the state. They especially ignored successful Democrats whenever possible. Nor were the two primary papers on the east side of the mountains, the Wenatchee Daily World and the Spokesman-Review any more forthcoming in praise. Thus did Dill's unique political position in the state contribute to his propensity for self promotion. If he hadn't promoted himself through his vast letter writing and public appearances, his constituents would seldom have heard about his efforts in their behalf. As his life continued into its post political period, this self promotion - once so politically necessary - became a habit which resulted in some unfavorable impressions.

The epic length of Dill's life presents other problems. He lived so long, and was involved in so many different events, that it is difficult to bring structure and balance to his biography. In that sense he is very much like the region he made home - the West. In truth, it is not too much to say that Dill is the archetypal Westerner: he never stopped building, never questioned whether or not building was progress.

We might excuse this optimistic boosterism if we could say about Dill what Stegner said in forgiving Oliver Ward's similar characteristics "he was simply an honest man."²⁷ But we cannot be sure. While I have argued that the evidence does not convict Dill of any wrongdoing, historians must go beyond legal qualifications in attempting to understand a life. In so doing I must admit that one thing continues to bother me concerning Dill's essential honesty: why did he not make his congressional papers available to scholars? He was not unaware of their value. Moreover, we know that he kept up a massive correspondence. But there

²⁷Stegner, Angle of Repose, 193.

are no papers extant from his congressional years. While researching Dill's life I had the opportunity to discuss this problem with John Fahey, author of several books on Pacific Northwest history. Fahey indicated that he had asked Dill several times about his congressional papers, but each time Dill evaded the question.²⁸ Fahey also observed that Dill often could be seen using the Congressional Record at Spokane's public library when he was working on Where Water Falls. He came to the conclusion that Dill had no congressional papers and was embarrassed about it. There are a number of possible scenarios which would explain why Dill himself did not seem to have access to his congressional papers, all of which would be pure speculation and will not detain us here. But until this problem is resolved, there can be no final assessment of Clarence Dill.

But one or two observations remain. Dill's life is one of those which substantially contributed to the molding of the United States into one nation. In as much as our national identity consists of both East and West - is a mingling of the two - Dill helped establish the mix. Born and raised in the Midwest, Dill emigrated to the West, as had most Westerners of the era. Once there he energetically pursued a political career, making a place for himself in his new home. Sent to Washington D.C. in the 1920's as a senator, he made his mark in the East through his work on radio legislation, which had a profound affect on the unification of the nation. Thus Dill's life and work can be seen as strengthening the ties that bound the nation together, ties which have held in tough times. Nor was he finished. Energized by a dream of cheap power and reclaiming otherwise useless frontier land, Dill sought and secured the aid of the federal government in developing the Columbia Basin. As a result Westerners grew to look more often

²⁸Dr. Robert Burke had essentially the same experience as Fahey when he questioned Dill about his congressional papers.

to Washington D.C. for solutions to their problems than in the past.

Dill embodied the more robust western version of the American spirit of his time in another way as well: he rose literally from dirt poor to upper middle class by his own exertions. At the same time he avoided developing contempt for those who failed to follow his example. He was always sympathetic to the less fortunate among his constituents as his voting record on farm and labor issues attests. In his efforts on behalf of the less prosperous members of society, Dill was an advocate of change. He understood the changes that were coming and wanted to be a part of the inevitable transformation they would bring. Indeed he wanted to lead in that transformation.

As we have seen, Dill's life links East and West and demonstrates the mutability of American social classes. It also serves as a bridge between past and present: the West of today, in many ways, is still very much like the West of Clarence Dill's youth: vast open spaces, wilderness, populations centered in cities, and, of course, the condition of aridity in most of the region. Consequently, life in the modern Pacific Northwest depends to a great extent on the existence of irrigation and hydro-electric power, two developments in which Dill played a leading role. Few of us would be willing to renounce these developments, which brings us to the answer to the question posed much earlier. Is it more instructive for Pacific Northwesterners of today to view themselves as essentially similar to their antecedents of the first half of the twentieth century, or have we become so different that those differences define who we are? There can be no question that there are differences. We have observed a few of them. But the overwhelming fact remains that we share an abiding faith in progress with those who came before us in this region, we still believe government can be a tool in that progress, and that building and development are good if carefully managed. Careful management

implies cooperation and compromise amongst competing interests; it has always been so. In the best Western tradition, the tradition Dill embodied, cooperation will be the path to progress.

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